

Mr. ERICKSON. No.

Chairman KERRY. You are not a trained image analyst. Have you had any training in imagery analysis?

Mr. DUSSAULT. Yes, sir. That was several years ago, over 25 years ago. But I wouldn't say I'm qualified today to be a photo interpreter.

Chairman KERRY. So you were looking at this with the naked eye, basically.

Mr. DUSSAULT. Yes, sir.

Chairman KERRY. And the naked eye said, on a bad print, there are a bunch of numbers. Do you think there are numbers there today, having reanalyzed this and looked at it?

Mr. ERICKSON. No. I've looked at the numbers, all of the 19 of them. We went back and looked at each spot on good photography and on the light table, both, and we couldn't find them.

Chairman KERRY. Now you are truly satisfied as to that.

Mr. ERICKSON. Yes.

Chairman KERRY. Your interest is in seeing somebody come out of there alive, would it not be?

Mr. ERICKSON. Very much so.

Chairman KERRY. You trained people how to stay alive.

Mr. ERICKSON. Correct.

Chairman KERRY. So you would not come here and overlook a possibility that that is a real number, would you?

Mr. ERICKSON. No. The ones that were in the open rice paddies, we looked at those carefully and either they faded away or they were areas where they had burned off the rice stubble and made black marks that looked like numbers.

Chairman KERRY. Now, with respect to the K up there, it has been referred to occasionally as a walking K. Without getting into great details about walking, does that appear to be a walking K?

Mr. ERICKSON. To me, it does.

Chairman KERRY. It does?

Mr. ERICKSON. Yes, it does.

Chairman KERRY. And it has the walking appearance, whatever that extra—I don't want to get into any classified area. Do you believe it's distinctly a K?

Mr. DUSSAULT. It to me looks like a K, and that's how I think we ought to consider it. And I've said that in writing, I think, and I've really done that for a reason. My position is—

Chairman KERRY. Give it the benefit—

Mr. DUSSAULT. Give the benefit of the doubt to the operator. That's always been my concern.

Chairman KERRY. Let me ask you this. Assuming—can you imagine, based on your knowledge of survival and escape, and so forth, if someone were under guard—this USA is how big?

Mr. DUSSAULT. I've been told that each letter is about 12 feet high and about 30 some odd feet wide, the entire USA.

Chairman KERRY. The entire USA is 30 feet wide?

Mr. DUSSAULT. Yes, sir.

Chairman KERRY. And how wide is each letter?

Mr. DUSSAULT. Oh, I don't know. What did you say?

Mr. ERICKSON. I've got no idea.

Chairman KERRY. How wide is each letter?

Mr. ANDREWS. Probably about 5 to 7 feet wide, and then the thickness is—

Chairman KERRY. Now, we have discussed this previously, and this is not classified. But how long would it take a person to dig out a USA of that size?

Mr. DUSSAULT. Mr. Erickson has trained people in the Philippines to do this kind of stuff, so go ahead, Al.

Chairman KERRY. Mr. Erickson, that is a big letter, is it not?

Mr. ERICKSON. Are we talking about the K or the USA?

Chairman KERRY. The USA. How long would it take to make one of these?

Mr. ERICKSON. At least an hour per letter for one individual.

Chairman KERRY. So, 3 hours of work?

Mr. ERICKSON. At least.

Chairman KERRY. Pretty solid work, too. It's hard to imagine somebody doing that in the state of captivity, would you not assume? I mean, if somebody is there at gun point, and somebody is digging out "USA."

Mr. ERICKSON. There are too many variables for me to determine whether it was at gunpoint or not.

Chairman KERRY. Well, think about it for a minute, from what you have read from all the debriefs of how our prisoners were held over there.

Mr. ERICKSON. If he was at gunpoint, that would be very difficult to do. If he was not at gunpoint, but turned loose in an area, then it would—

Chairman KERRY. So, presuming the guy is loose, then. That is just what I want to establish. I mean, what is reality here? Under gun, I assume, you believe it would be very hard in a guarded situation to do that kind of work?

Mr. ERICKSON. Correct.

Chairman KERRY. Now, is there any explanation for why such a fabulous job has been done with the USA, and it is so finely shaped and so dug out, but the K is not dug, there's no evidence that it's of similar fashion, but the stubble that has been taken out to make the USA is clearly sort of transported to somewhere, I would assume. Is that correct?

Mr. ERICKSON. The stubble would have to be moved, yes.

Chairman KERRY. And the supposition has been made by analysts that it makes some sense to presume that maybe the stubble that was taken out of the USA to dig it out got put over in this pile. Is that possible?

Mr. ERICKSON. That's possible, or it could be stacked around the edges of the letter.

Chairman KERRY. Well how, from your survival techniques, would you explain the difference? If somebody has time to do 3 hours minimum of work to dig out USA, why wouldn't the K be more defined?

Mr. ERICKSON. My initial speculation on how this was constructed consisted of, first the K was constructed under observation, and it was done very shabbily because somebody was watching. And it drew no attention.

So, I speculated that somebody became frustrated and then either at night or when unobserved got out there and put out the

USA. That was a speculation. That is a scenario I tried to develop to figure out how this could happen.

Chairman KERRY. USA is not an identifier or a number, or anything that anybody is trained to do. Is that correct?

Mr. ERICKSON. No.

Chairman KERRY. This is totally creative.

Mr. DUSSAULT. Sir, in our training we try to bring out the bottom line, and that is communicate any way you can who you are and that you're there. If the individual has tried a particular method and it hasn't worked, try something else.

In this case, in my mind, it's a possibility that the individual may have tried over the last 15 years various signals. None of those got any attention, so he's going to go with a blatant USA.

Chairman KERRY. Fair enough. Mr. Secretary, do you have any comment on any of this?

Mr. ANDREWS. No, I don't have a disagreement with Mr. Erickson.

Chairman KERRY. So, you people would accept what they have said as the possibilities and, in fact, you are treating it that way. Is that correct?

Mr. ANDREWS. Absolutely. We don't rule out that it was made by someone deliberately trying to make a K.

Chairman KERRY. And the question is, really, what? That you just do not know or there is no way to pin it down further?

Mr. ANDREWS. Well, we have taken actions, as I said in my statement, using all available intelligence resources to try to determine whether there was an American prisoner or an American escaped prisoner in that area. We have, so far, been unsuccessful. You landed in that general area, and you talked to people. We have continued to discuss it with everybody that we can. We're continuing our intelligence efforts as we brief to the committee. Right now, it just remains an unanswered question.

Chairman KERRY. Now, this may be a good point to have Mr. Gadoury come forward and add something to this discussion. Then we can continue with Senator Grassley asking some questions also.

Vice Chairman SMITH. As he is coming, I just wanted to followup on what you were asking. On the escape aspect, in regard to questions on how a prisoner could make a signal while under some form of loose detention or work detail, Mr. Erickson, I think somewhere in your deposition you indicated that a signal could be made by shuffling feet, making a crude large signal. You then said that the USA appears to be made with intent and with tools, sharp edges, well done. But the K is for captivity. It lends credence, as opposed to detracts from it.

Would you speculate on whether the USA could have been a desperation move, for example? It says, hey, you cannot see it? Now I will let you see it?

Mr. ERICKSON. That's what I just finished speculating, or I thought I tried to do, anyhow.

Chairman KERRY. That is what I understood you to say.

Vice Chairman SMITH. But we cannot assume that—that is, in fact, an escape signal, we cannot assume—an evasion signal—that we cannot assume that that is made while the person is in captivity, can we? The person could have escaped, is that not correct?

Mr. DUSSAULT. Yes, sir, that is correct.

Vice Chairman SMITH. And made it while he was escaping?

Mr. DUSSAULT. Yes, that's one of the possibilities. He could be an escapee hiding out in that area, made a K, went back into hiding, for a couple of weeks, stayed close by, within a kilometer, which is his training, and then goes back and does the USA. Again, maybe even at night, under a moonlit night, or something like that, he gets out there and works for 3 hours.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Is there any facility nearby where that symbol is that could hide someone? A cave, for example? Is there a cave nearby there, near that location, Mr. Andrews?

Chairman KERRY. I was just going to say Mr. Gadoury has been in the area, and I think we ought to get him on this. That is why I wanted to bring him up.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Mr. Gadoury?

Mr. GADOURY. Senator Kerry, Senator Smith, before I begin my written remarks—

Vice Chairman SMITH. If you could just answer that question.

Senator GRASSLEY. Before you begin your remarks, I have not had my round of questioning yet.

Chairman KERRY. Senator, what I was hoping was, since all of us are trying to ask questions about the USA-K, the individual that investigated it had some comments and his statement. I thought we would get it on the record and then come right back to you.

Senator GRASSLEY. OK. That's all right.

Chairman KERRY. Mr. Gadoury, if you could basically give us your statement as to the USA-K in January 1988, April 1992. You have testified previously. And I would just remind you, you have already taken an oath before the committee, and you are still under oath as you testify today. Thank you.

Just identify yourself very quickly for the record.

Mr. GADOURY. Yes, sir. My name is William Gadoury, and I am a member of the Joint Task Force-Full Accounting. I work at the Detachment Three location in Vientiane, Laos.

Chairman KERRY. How long have you been there?

Mr. GADOURY. I went there in January of this year to establish the Joint Task Force office there in Vientiane.

Chairman KERRY. Had you traveled to Laos previously?

Mr. GADOURY. Since 1985, I have been assigned to the JCRC Joint Casualty Resolution Center liaison office in Bangkok. And from there, I've been going in with the teams into Laos, back and forth.

Chairman KERRY. How many trips into Laos would you say you have made?

Mr. GADOURY. I've pretty much lost count, but it's probably in the neighborhood of 30 to 35.

Chairman KERRY. And you are fluent in the language?

Mr. GADOURY. That's correct.

Chairman KERRY. Why do you not give us your statement with respect to this, and then we will have some questions.

Mr. GADOURY. If I may say, the original statement that I prepared was centered on private Americans and organizations involved with collecting information in Southeast Asia. And because of the possible tie-in to the—

Chairman KERRY. Why do you not go through part of it.

Mr. GADOURY. Senator Kerry, Senator Smith, Members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear here again today to provide testimony concerning our Government's efforts to account for Americans missing or otherwise unaccounted for in Indochina.

As you will recall from my testimony last fall, my involvement with this issue dates back to 1984, when I was assigned to the Joint Casualty Resolution Center in Hawaii as a casualty resolution specialist. I moved to the JCRC's liaison office at the Embassy in Bangkok in 1985, where I was the first staff member dedicated solely to working this issue with respect to Americans unaccounted for in Laos.

In September 1990, I completed my 22 year Air Force career, and I continued working with the JCRC in the capacity of a civil servant, also at the Embassy, the JCRC office in Bangkok.

In conjunction with the formation of the Joint Task Force-Full Accounting in January of this year, I opened the Task Force Office Detachment Three in Vientiane, Laos, where I presently serve as a casualty resolution specialist and assistant to the Detachment commander.

I would like to address a few areas today in line with the reason that I was asked here originally. Specifically, I would like to share some of my experiences and observations concerning private organizations involved in the POW/MIA issue, and their efforts to collect or portray information on the issue. And like I said earlier, there is a potential tie-in. That's why I bring this up before we get started.

In 1985, when I was assigned to the JCRC office in Bangkok, field work in Laos was irregular and sporadic. I spent most of my time interviewing Lao refugees along the Thai-Lao border in an attempt to elicit pertinent information concerning unaccounted for Americans in Laos.

I also made it a point to seek out Lao citizens who either lived along the border in Thailand or who travelled back and forth. It was not long before I had developed a network of contacts and was travelling extensively and regularly along the Thai-Lao border from Chiang Rai Province in the North to Ubon Province in the South, actively attempting to expand my network of informants and to develop leads on POW/MIA-related information.

One of the things I discovered during this process was the fact that, in addition to our own Government's efforts to search for information about potential American POWs and unaccounted for Americans, there were a number of private American individuals and organizations who were engaged in similar activities, some more extensively and in a more organized fashion than others.

Chairman KERRY. In country itself, in Laos?

Mr. GADOURY. In Thailand, operating on the Thai border area or Bangkok. From my perspective, some of these people were involved out of a sincere motivation to learn the fate of unaccounted for Americans, particularly Americans who might still be alive or held captive. Others, it appeared, had more avaricious motives.

One private organization which I had contact with was an operation called Operation Rescue. Although I was not in contact with

the organization's founder, I did have contacts with several of his Thai or Lao associates. It appeared that through his contacts, he had a network of individuals, mostly Thai-based Laotians involved in the anti-Lao government resistance effort. These contacts passed information to him, and in some cases embarked on missions into Laos specifically to search for American POWs or remains from crash sites.

My only direct contact with Operation Rescue's founder was during the recent investigation of the widely-publicized photographs allegedly associated with an American POW. Subsequent investigations by the DIA determined that these photographs were fraudulent.

Another organization with which I had some dealings in 1988 to 1989 was—

Senator GRASSLEY. Mr. Chairman, if he is establishing his credibility, I do not think he has to do that. Why do you not have him go to the portion of his statement that is about the case?

Chairman KERRY. I think he is just there. I hope he is. I think it is important, because I want to come to another point on this in a second.

Mr. GADOURY. Another organization with which I had some dealings from 1988 to 1989 was Operation Homecoming II, which had established an office in Nakhon Phanom, Thailand, for the stated purpose of seeking out information about POWs in Indochina. On several occasions, I met and talked with the Americans who manned the office on a temporary basis to advertise the organization's reward and to interview people with POW/MIA-related information. While the office representatives shared with me some information related to deceased unaccounted for Americans, more extensive files with alleged information on live American POWs were withheld.

Operation Lazarus was an organization created by a retired Army officer. I had frequent contacts over a period of about 3 years with the organization's representative who worked out of Bangkok. He was generally cooperative, and frequently turned over POW/MIA-related information or referred me to sources that his contacts had developed. Unfortunately, some of these people who provided him with information were not the most scrupulous individuals, and many had ulterior motives.

Operation Snatch was a short-lived, limited scope operation—organization. It had several contacts—I had several contacts with its founder, a former associate of Operation Lazarus. The limited information passed to me by the founder had little substance. The founder is the same person who appeared in a British Broadcasting Corporation television documentary entitled: We Can Keep You Forever, portions of which purported to document underground attempts by his group to rescue POWs from Laos.

In this production, the Operation Snatch founder is pictured in military fatigues with members of a Lao resistance group who were purportedly planning, quote, another foray, unquote, into Laos in an attempt to rescue American POWs. He later admitted to me that the entire BBC episode had been staged. He further admitted that he had never actually crossed into Laos.

Another private organization, Operation Skyhook II, routinely passed POW/MIA-related information through the U.S. Consulate in Udorn, Thailand when I was first assigned to Bangkok. On 18 March 1987, after the consular officer in Udorn departed, I was introduced to the Skyhook II Bangkok representative.

Except for the first meeting, all of my contacts were by telephone. While some information was parcelled out during our telephone conversations, appeals to turn over to the U.S. Government information kept in the organization's computer files were refused. As with all information concerning alleged POWs or unaccounted for Americans, I submitted reports of my conversations or information he passed to me through JCRC's channels.

Each of the organizations I have mentioned here, as well as others, established some type of POW/MIA information gathering network. Some were more sophisticated than others, and all depended on funds to pay informants or hired agents.

In an effort to tap into all available information on the issue, I actively pursued contacts with the individuals associated with these organizations; both the American organizers and their Lao contacts. Some were cooperative, such as the Operation Lazarus representative that I mentioned, who regularly passed along information. Others, such as Operation Rescue, were more elusive and uncooperative in sharing their information.

During one meeting I had with a Homecoming II representative who managed the organization's office in Nakhon Phanom, Thailand, he showed me a large binder with many handwritten pages of POW/MIA interviews which he and others had collected. When I appealed to him to share this information with the U.S. Government, he replied that he could not release it.

Overall, most of the information passed from these organizations was of marginal value, either hearsay or fabricated POW reports, or so-called dog tag reports. In some cases, of which I am aware, locally hired Lao agents passed information which they knew to be false simply to collect their fee and secure another engagement.

In one case, a Lao refugee told me that he had been hired by the founder of Operation Rescue, who the refugee was led to believe was a U.S. Government official, to seek out American aircraft crash sites, and to search for and retrieve American remains. He was given a small amount of up-front money to buy food and supplies with the promise of a much larger payment upon successful mission completion.

After collecting remains at a crash site in Southern Laos, his group was discovered by Lao soldiers. One of his team members was killed in the ensuing shoot-out, and he himself was wounded seriously.

Upon his return to Thailand, he turned over the remains collected to the Operation Rescue founder, but he did not receive the wages that he had been promised. These may have been the same remains which Operation Rescue, in September 1987, exhibited wrapped in a U.S. flag at a press conference in Altoona, Pennsylvania.

One of the more unusual cases with which I was involved was a report from Operation Skyhook II—the Bangkok representative there. In early 1988, he called me to report that one of his opera-

tives in Laos had obtained reliable information about an American prisoner, identified by name, who was being held somewhere near Sam Neua in Northern Laos.

A few days after passing this information, the representative called back to offer his full cooperation in sharing of information in the matter if the U.S. Government would grant him a security clearance and full access to intelligence information in the area, including overhead satellite photography. I informed him that the JCRC's mission was strictly humanitarian and did not involve intelligence matters, and then I referred him to DIA's newly-formed Stoney Beach representative.

Subsequently, DIA received indications that the letters USA had been made in the rice paddy in the same general vicinity as the location of the alleged American prisoner reported by the Skyhook II representative. You have seen the photographs and you have heard DIA's assessment of the possible—I stress, possible—connection between the Skyhook II representative's report and his request for access, and the subsequent discovery of the USA in the rice paddy.

And, of course you recall, Senator Kerry and Senator Smith, our own visit to the area where the USA letters and symbol were spotted during your committee's trip to Laos in April of this year. None of the local residents that we talked with on that day had any knowledge of Americans ever having been held in the area, prisoner or otherwise.

In conclusion, the efforts of individuals and private organizations to gather information about and locate unaccounted for Americans may have stemmed from a sense of frustration, and a belief that the U.S. Government was not doing enough to account for Americans unaccounted for in Indochina. But on the other hand, individuals who have raised large sums of money in the name of rescuing American POWs must be held to question.

While we work for a full accounting of our missing and unaccounted for, we should also demand a full accounting from those who have engaged in fabricating information to further their personal or organizational financial goals, and at the same time false-ly raising hopes of the American people, especially the families of our missing and unaccounted for.

Over the past year, the Department of Defense has significantly increased the assets dedicated to resolving the POW/MIA issue, including the establishment of the Joint Task Force-Full Accounting in January of this year, and the expansion of other organizations directly involved in the issue. With these additional resources focused on the issue, along with increased levels of cooperation by the Indochinese governments, hopefully private individuals will no longer feel the need, nor have the excuse, to take matters into their own hands.

As I told you the last time I was here, I entered into this project with the intention and fervent hope that I could contribute to determining one way or the other if any American MIAs were held in Indochina beyond Operation Homecoming in 1973. After 8 years of searching neither I, nor the teams comprised of representatives of the Joint Task Force-Full Accounting and its predecessor, JCRC, or the Army's Central Identification Laboratory, DIA's Stony Beach

Team, and support personnel from various other military units, all of whom have worked so diligently, have found proof that any of our missing survived after the prisoner release from Hanoi in 1973.

Yet, as long as the possibility exists that there could have been or could still be, we must continue the search. With the increased resources being devoted to the issue and with continued, improved cooperation on the part of the Vietnamese and Lao Governments, and the coalition in Cambodia, we are getting closer to a full as possible accounting than ever before.

That concludes my prepared statement. Thank you.  
[The prepared statement of Mr. Gadoury follows:]

THE PREPARED STATEMENT OF WILLIAM R. GADOURY, JR.

SENATOR KERRY, SENATOR SMITH, MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE,  
THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO APPEAR AGAIN HERE TODAY TO  
PROVIDE TESTIMONY CONCERNING OUR GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS TO ACCOUNT  
FOR AMERICANS MISSING OR OTHERWISE UNACCOUNTED FOR IN THE LAO  
PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC.

AS YOU WILL RECALL FROM MY EARLIER TESTIMONY LAST FALL, MY  
INVOLVEMENT WITH THIS ISSUE DATES TO 1984, WHEN I WAS ASSIGNED TO  
THE JOINT CASUALTY RESOLUTION CENTER IN HAWAII AS A CASUALTY  
RESOLUTION SPECIALIST. I MOVED TO THE JCRC'S LIAISON OFFICE AT  
OUR EMBASSY IN BANGKOK IN 1985, WHERE I WAS THE FIRST STAFF  
MEMBER DEDICATED SOLELY TO WORKING THIS ISSUE WITH RESPECT TO  
AMERICANS UNACCOUNTED FOR IN LAOS.

IN SEPTEMBER, 1990, I COMPLETED MY 22 YEAR AIR FORCE CAREER,  
DEPARTING THE SERVICE IN THE GRADE OF CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT. I  
WAS HIRED THE NEXT MONTH INTO A VACANT CIVIL SERVICE POSITION,  
ALSO AT THE JCRC LIAISON OFFICE IN BANGKOK.

IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE FORMATION OF THE JOINT TASK FORCE-  
FULL ACCOUNTING IN JANUARY OF THIS YEAR, I OPENED THE TASK

FORCE'S DETACHMENT THREE OFFICE IN VIENTIANE, LAOS, WHERE I PRESENTLY SERVE AS THE CASUALTY RESOLUTION SPECIALIST AND ASSISTANT TO THE DETACHMENT COMMANDER.

I WOULD LIKE TO ADDRESS A FEW SPECIFIC AREAS TODAY, IN LINE WITH THE REASON I WAS ASKED TO BE HERE TODAY. SPECIFICALLY, I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE SOME OF MY EXPERIENCES AND OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED IN THE POW/MIA ISSUE AND THEIR EFFORTS TO COLLECT OR PORTRAY INFORMATION ON THE ISSUE.

AS I SAID, I WAS FIRST ASSIGNED TO BANGKOK AS A CASUALTY RESOLUTION SPECIALIST IN 1985. AT THAT TIME, FIELD WORK IN LAOS WAS IRREGULAR AND SPORADIC. I SPENT MOST OF MY TIME INTERVIEWING LAO REFUGEES ALONG THE THAI/LAO BORDER IN AN ATTEMPT TO ELICIT PERTINENT INFORMATION CONCERNING UNACCOUNTED FOR AMERICANS IN LAOS.

I ALSO MADE IT A POINT TO SEEK LAO CITIZENS WHO EITHER LIVED ALONG THE BORDER IN THAILAND, OR WHO TRAVELED BACK AND FORTH. IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE I HAD DEVELOPED A NETWORK OF CONTACTS AND WAS TRAVELLING EXTENSIVELY AND REGULARLY ALONG THE THAI/LAO BORDER FROM CHIANG RAI PROVINCE IN THE NORTH TO UBON IN THE SOUTH,

ACTIVELY ATTEMPTING TO EXPAND MY NETWORK OF INFORMANTS AND TO DEVELOP LEADS ON POW/MIA RELATED INFORMATION.

ONE OF THE THINGS I DISCOVERED DURING THIS PROCESS WAS THE FACT THAT, IN ADDITION TO OUR OWN GOVERNMENTAL EFFORTS AT SEEKING OUT AND ANALYZING INFORMATION ABOUT POTENTIAL AMERICAN POWS AND UNACCOUNTED FOR AMERICANS, THERE WERE A NUMBER OF PRIVATE AMERICAN INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS WHO WERE ENGAGED IN THE SAME QUEST - SOME MORE EXTENSIVELY AND IN A MORE ORGANIZED FASHION THAN OTHERS. FROM MY PERSPECTIVE, SOME WERE INVOLVED OUT OF A SINCERE MOTIVATION TO LEARN THE FATE OF UNACCOUNTED FOR AMERICANS; PARTICULARLY AMERICANS WHO MIGHT STILL HAVE BEEN HELD CAPTIVE. OTHERS, IT APPEARED, HELD MORE AVARICIOUS MOTIVES, SUCH AS PERSONAL PROFIT FROM THE ISSUE.

ONE PRIVATE ORGANIZATION WITH WHICH I HAD CONTACT WAS "OPERATION RESCUE." ALTHOUGH I WAS NOT IN CONTACT WITH THE ORGANIZATION'S FOUNDER, I DID HAVE CONTACTS WITH SEVERAL OF HIS THAI AND LAO ASSOCIATES. IT APPEARED THAT THROUGH HIS CONTACTS HE HAD A NETWORK OF INDIVIDUALS, MOSTLY THAILAND-BASED LAOTIANS INVOLVED WITH THE ANTI LAO GOVERNMENT RESISTANCE EFFORT IN THAT COUNTRY. THESE CONTACTS PASSED INFORMATION TO HIM, AND IN SOME

CASES EMBARKED ON MISSIONS INTO LAOS SPECIFICALLY TO SEARCH FOR AMERICAN POWS OR REMAINS FROM CRASH SITES. MY ONLY DIRECT CONTACT WITH THE FOUNDER OF OPERATION RESCUE'S FOUNDER WAS DURING THE RECENT INVESTIGATION OF THE WIDELY PUBLICIZED PHOTOGRAPHS ALLEGEDLY ASSOCIATED WITH CAPTAIN CARR.

ANOTHER ORGANIZATION WITH WHICH I HAD SOME DEALINGS IN 1988-89 WAS "OPERATION HOMECOMING II" WHICH HAD ESTABLISHED AN OFFICE IN NAKHON PHANOM, THAILAND, FOR THE PURPOSE OF SEEKING OUT INFORMATION ABOUT POTENTIAL POWS IN INDOCHINA. ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS I MET AND TALKED WITH AMERICANS WHO MANNED THE OFFICE ON A TEMPORARY BASIS TO ADVERTISE THE ORGANIZATION'S REWARD AND TO INTERVIEW ANYONE WITH POW/MIA RELATED INFORMATION. WHILE THE OFFICE REPRESENTATIVES SHARED WITH ME SOME INFORMATION RELATED TO DECEASED UNACCOUNTED FOR AMERICANS, MORE EXTENSIVE FILES WITH ALLEGED INFORMATION ON LIVE AMERICAN POWS WERE WITHHELD.

"OPERATION LAZARUS" WAS AN ORGANIZATION CREATED BY A RETIRED ARMY OFFICER. I HAD FREQUENT CONTACTS OVER A PERIOD OF ABOUT THREE YEARS WITH THE ORGANIZATION'S REPRESENTATIVE WHO WORKED OUT OF BANGKOK. HE WAS GENERALLY COOPERATIVE AND FREQUENTLY TURNED OVER POW/MIA RELATED INFORMATION OR REFERRED ME TO SOURCES THAT

HIS CONTACTS HAD DEVELOPED. UNFORTUNATELY, SOME OF THE PEOPLE WHO PROVIDED HIM WITH INFORMATION WERE NOT THE MOST SCRUPULOUS INDIVIDUALS AND MANY HAD ULTERIOR MOTIVES.

"OPERATION SNATCH" WAS A SHORT-LIVED LIMITED SCOPE ORGANIZATION. I HAD SEVERAL CONTACTS WITH ITS FOUNDER, A FORMER ASSOCIATE WITH "OPERATION LAZARUS." THE LIMITED INFORMATION PASSED TO ME BY THE FOUNDER HAD LITTLE SUBSTANCE. THE FOUNDER IS THE SAME PERSON WHO APPEARED IN A BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION TELEVISION DOCUMENTARY ENTITLED "WE CAN KEEP YOU FOREVER," PORTIONS OF WHICH PURPORTED TO DOCUMENT UNDERGROUND ATTEMPTS BY HIS GROUP TO RESCUE POWS FROM LAOS. IN THIS PRODUCTION, THE OPERATION SNATCH FOUNDER IS PICTURED IN MILITARY FATIGUES WITH MEMBERS OF A LAO RESISTANCE GROUP WHO WERE PURPORTEDLY PLANNING "ANOTHER FORAY" INTO LAOS IN AN ATTEMPT TO RESCUE AMERICAN POW'S. HE LATER ADMITTED TO ME THAT THE ENTIRE BBC EPISODE HAD BEEN STAGED BECAUSE HE NEEDED THE MONEY. HE FURTHER ADMITTED THAT HE HAD NEVER ACTUALLY CROSSED INTO LAOS.

"OPERATION SKYHOOK II" ROUTINELY PASSED POW/MIA RELATED INFORMATION THROUGH THE U.S. CONSULATE IN UDORN, THAILAND, WHEN I WAS FIRST ASSIGNED TO BANGKOK. IN 1986, WHEN THE CONSULAR

OFFICER DEPARTED, HE PASSED THE SKYHOOK II BANGKOK REPRESENTATIVE TO ME. EXCEPT FOR THE FIRST MEETING, ALL CONTACTS WERE BY TELEPHONE. WHILE SOME INFORMATION WAS PARCELED OUT DURING OUR TELEPHONE CONVERSATIONS, APPEALS TO TURN OVER TO THE U.S. GOVERNMENT INFORMATION KEPT IN THE ORGANIZATION'S COMPUTER FILES WERE REFUSED. AS WITH ALL INFORMATION OBTAINED CONCERNING ALLEGED POWS OR UNACCOUNTED FOR AMERICANS, I SUBMITTED REPORTS THROUGH JCRC CHANNELS.

EACH OF THE ORGANIZATIONS I'VE MENTIONED HERE, AS WELL AS OTHERS, ESTABLISHED SOME TYPE OF POW/MIA INFORMATION GATHERING NETWORK. SOME WERE MORE SOPHISTICATED THAN OTHERS, AND ALL DEPENDED ON FUNDS TO PAY INFORMANTS OR HIRED AGENTS.

IN AN EFFORT TO TAP INTO ALL AVAILABLE INFORMATION ON THE ISSUE, I ACTIVELY PURSUED CONTACTS WITH THE INDIVIDUALS ASSOCIATED WITH THESE ORGANIZATIONS; BOTH THE AMERICAN ORGANIZERS AND THEIR LAO CONTACTS. SOME WERE COOPERATIVE; SUCH AS THE OPERATION LAZARUS REPRESENTATIVE WHO REGULARLY PASSED ALONG INFORMATION. OTHERS, SUCH AS OPERATION RESCUE, WERE MORE ELUSIVE AND UNCOOPERATIVE IN SHARING THEIR INFORMATION. DURING ONE MEETING I HAD WITH A HOMECOMING II REPRESENTATIVE WHO MANAGED THE

ORGANIZATION'S OFFICE IN NAKHON PHANOM, THAILAND, HE SHOWED ME A LARGE BINDER WITH MANY HANDWRITTEN PAGES OF POW/MIA INTERVIEWS WHICH HE AND OTHERS HAD COLLECTED. WHEN I APPEALED TO HIM TO SHARE THIS INFORMATION WITH U.S. GOVERNMENT, HE REPLIED THAT HE COULD NOT RELEASE IT.

OVERALL, MOST OF THE INFORMATION PASSED FROM THESE ORGANIZATIONS WAS OF MARGINAL VALUE - EITHER HEARSAY OR FABRICATED POW REPORTS, OR SO-CALLED "DOG TAG" REPORTS. IN SOME CASES OF WHICH I AM AWARE, LOCALLY HIRED LAO AGENTS PASSED INFORMATION WHICH THEY KNEW TO BE FALSE SIMPLY TO COLLECT THEIR FEE AND SECURE ANOTHER ENGAGEMENT.

IN ONE CASE, A LAO REFUGEE TOLD ME HE HAD BEEN HIRED BY THE FOUNDER OF OPERATION RESCUE, WHO THE REFUGEE WAS LED TO BELIEVE WAS A U.S. GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL, TO SEEK OUT AMERICAN AIRCRAFT CRASH SITES TO SEARCH FOR AND RETRIEVE AMERICAN REMAINS. HE WAS GIVEN A SMALL AMOUNT OF UP-FRONT MONEY TO BUY FOOD AND SUPPLIES, WITH A PROMISE OF A MUCH LARGER PAYMENT UPON SUCCESSFUL MISSION COMPLETION. AFTER COLLECTING REMAINS AT A CRASH SITE IN SOUTHERN LAOS, HIS GROUP WAS DISCOVERED BY LAO SOLDIERS. ONE OF HIS TEAM MEMBERS WAS KILLED IN THE ENSUING SHOOT-OUT, AND HE, HIMSELF, WAS

WOUNDED SERIOUSLY. UPON HIS RETURN TO THAILAND, HE TURNED OVER THE REMAINS COLLECTED TO THE OPERATION RESCUE FOUNDER, BUT HE DID NOT RECEIVE THE WAGES HE HAD BEEN PROMISED. THESE MAY HAVE BEEN THE SAME REMAINS WHICH OPERATION RESCUE, IN SEPTEMBER 1987, EXHIBITED WRAPPED IN A U.S. FLAG AT A PRESS CONFERENCE IN ALTOONA, PENNSYLVANIA.

ONE OF THE MORE UNUSUAL CASES WITH WHICH I WAS INVOLVED WAS A REPORT FROM OPERATION SKYHOOK II'S BANGKOK REPRESENTATIVE. IN EARLY 1988, HE CALLED ME TO REPORT THAT ONE OF HIS OPERATIVES IN LAOS HAD OBTAINED RELIABLE INFORMATION THAT AN AMERICAN PRISONER, IDENTIFIED BY NAME, WAS BEING HELD IN NORTHERN LAOS. A FEW DAYS AFTER PASSING THIS INFORMATION, THE REPRESENTATIVE CALLED BACK TO OFFER HIS FULL COOPERATION AND SHARING OF INFORMATION IN THE MATTER IF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT WOULD GRANT HIM A SECURITY CLEARANCE AND FULL ACCESS TO INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION ON THE AREA, INCLUDING OVERHEAD SATELLITE PHOTOGRAPHY. SINCE JCRC'S MISSION WAS STRICTLY HUMANITARIAN AND NOT INVOLVED IN INTELLIGENCE MATTERS, THE REPRESENTATIVE WAS REFERRED TO DIA'S NEWLY FORMED STONY BEACH OFFICE.

SUBSEQUENTLY, DIA RECEIVED INDICATIONS THAT THE LETTERS

"U S A" HAD BEEN MADE IN A RICE PADDY IN THE SAME GENERAL VICINITY AS THE LOCATION OF THE ALLEGED AMERICAN PRISONER REPORTED BY THE SKYHOOK II REPRESENTATIVE. YOU HAVE SEEN THOSE PHOTOGRAPHS AND YOU HAVE HEARD DIA'S ASSESSMENT OF THE POSSIBLE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE SKYHOOK II REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT AND REQUEST FOR ACCESS, AND THE SUBSEQUENT DISCOVERY OF THE "U S A" IN THE RICE PADDY.

AND OF COURSE YOU WILL RECALL, SENATORS KERRY AND SMITH, OUR OWN VISIT TO THE AREA WHERE THE USA LETTERS AND THE SYMBOL WERE SPOTTED, DURING YOUR COMMITTEE'S TRIP TO LAOS IN APRIL OF THIS YEAR. NONE OF THE LOCAL RESIDENTS WE TALKED WITH THAT DAY HAD ANY KNOWLEDGE OF AMERICANS EVER BEING IN THE AREA, HELD PRISONER OR OTHERWISE.

IN CONCLUSION, THE EFFORTS OF SOME INDIVIDUALS AND PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS TO GATHER INFORMATION ABOUT AND POTENTIALLY LOCATE UNACCOUNTED FOR AMERICANS MAY HAVE STEMMED FROM A SENSE OF FRUSTRATION AND A BELIEF THAT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT WAS NOT DOING ENOUGH TO ACCOUNT FOR AMERICANS UNACCOUNTED FOR IN INDOCHINA. BUT, ON THE OTHER HAND, INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE RAISED LARGE SUMS OF MONEY IN THE NAME OF RESCUING AMERICAN POWS MUST BE HELD TO

QUESTION. WHILE WE WORK FOR A FULL ACCOUNTING OF OUR MISSING AND UNACCOUNTED FOR, WE SHOULD ALSO DEMAND A FULL ACCOUNTING FROM THOSE WHO HAVE ENGAGED IN FABRICATING INFORMATION TO FURTHER THEIR PERSONAL OR ORGANIZATIONAL FINANCIAL GOALS AT THE WHILE AT THE SAME TIME FALSELY RAISING THE HOPES OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE -- ESPECIALLY THE FAMILIES OF OUR MISSING AND UNACCOUNTED FOR. OVER THE PAST YEAR, THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE HAS SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED THE ASSETS DEDICATED TO RESOLVING THE POW/MIA ISSUE, INCLUDING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE JOINT TASK FORCE - FULL ACCOUNTING IN JANUARY OF THE THIS YEAR, AND THE EXPANSION OF OTHER ORGANIZATIONS DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE ISSUE. WITH THESE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOCUSED ON THE ISSUE ALONG WITH INCREASED LEVELS OF COOPERATION BY THE INDOCHINESE GOVERNMENTS, HOPEFULLY PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS WILL NO LONGER FEEL THE NEED -- NOR HAVE THE EXCUSE -- TO TAKE MATTERS INTO THEIR OWN HANDS.

AS I TOLD YOU THE LAST TIME I WAS HERE, I ENTERED INTO THIS PROJECT WITH THE INTENTION AND FERVENT HOPE THAT I COULD CONTRIBUTE TO DETERMINING, ONE WAY OR THE OTHER, IF ANY AMERICAN MIAS WERE HELD IN INDOCHINA BEYOND OPERATION HOMECOMING IN 1973. AFTER EIGHT YEARS OF SEARCHING, NEITHER I NOR THE TEAMS COMPRISED OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE JOINT TASK FORCE - FULL ACCOUNTING AND

ITS PREDECESSOR, JCRC; THE ARMY'S CENTRAL IDENTIFICATION LABORATORY; DIA'S STONY BEACH TEAM; AND SUPPORT PERSONNEL FROM VARIOUS OTHER MILITARY UNITS - ALL OF WHOM HAVE WORKED SO DILIGENTLY - HAVE FOUND PROOF THAT ANY OF OUR MISSING SURVIVED AFTER THE PRISONER RELEASE FROM HANOI IN 1973. YET, AS LONG AS THE POSSIBILITY EXISTS THAT THERE COULD HAVE BEEN, OR COULD STILL BE, WE MUST CONTINUE TO SEARCH. WITH THE INCREASED RESOURCES BEING DEVOTED TO THE ISSUE AND WITH CONTINUED IMPROVED COOPERATION ON THE PART OF THE VIETNAMESE AND LAO GOVERNMENTS AND THE COALITION IN CAMBODIA, WE ARE GETTING CLOSER TO A FULLEST POSSIBLE ACCOUNTING THAN EVER BEFORE.

THANK YOU, THAT CONCLUDES MY PREPARED STATEMENT. I LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR QUESTIONS.

Chairman KERRY. Thank you very much, Mr. Gadoury. I think, obviously, I wanted you to have that statement on the record in full because, number one, it bears on some of the judgments and possibilities with respect to this. But also, I think, it gives a larger view of what you are up against, and some of the problems that you have in trying to pursue your task. Also, we do not want to have to drag you back here if we can help it, and interrupt your work yet again for the final course of hearings. And I know that some of that bears on some of the final course.

Let me just ask you very quickly, how many thousands of Lao have you talked to do you think, or hundreds, or whatever? How many interviews?

Mr. GADOURY. Since 1985, when I started making regular trips to refugee camps and villages along the Thai border in which many Lao live, I've encountered certainly thousands of Lao. And of those people, have interviewed hundreds with information related to unaccounted for Americans, mostly in Laos.

Chairman KERRY. Have any of them given you a lead that you have been able to follow that you have considered real or found to be real with respect to an American being alive?

Mr. GADOURY. In my recollection, in all the people that I talked to, there were three people who provided information, first-hand live sighting information, of what they said were American prisoners or people being held against their will. In two of those cases, I participated in followup interviews and even polygraph exams, and neither of the first two individuals were determined to be presenting truthful information. In fact, there were indications of—

Chairman KERRY. Deception?

Mr. GADOURY. Deception in each case. In the third case, the Stoney Beach office followed up, and I understand that in that case it was determined that there was no substance to the individual's report.

Chairman KERRY. Now, in the case of this USA, have you been up in that area?

Mr. GADOURY. Yes, sir, I have.

Chairman KERRY. Where the USA is?

Mr. GADOURY. Right.

Chairman KERRY. Apart from landing there in a helicopter with Senator Smith and myself, you have been there otherwise?

Mr. GADOURY. I have been to Sam Neua in Houa Phan Province on three separate occasions, one of which was with yourselves in April of this year.

Chairman KERRY. Are other Americans up there in that area too?

Mr. GADOURY. Americans and other Caucasian foreigners have travelled in and through the area.

Chairman KERRY. Such as what set of circumstances?

Mr. GADOURY. Volunteer workers, UNDP people, people representing Mennonites or other religious groups have gone up to—

Chairman KERRY. Being realistic and talking turkey about this, I mean, if somebody saw fit to put a USA sign there and they were capable of doing that—I am just trying to get a sense of this—but I am having trouble not imagining that they could not stumble into

you, or the Mennonites, or the AFS, or some other group and say, here I am.

Mr. GADOURY. I guess that's a possibility. I would point out that beyond the teams that have gone in there, first in April 1991, and then the second time in December 1991, we've also had a team of 10 U.S. Army Engineers build a school in Sam Neua, only a few kilometers from where the USA symbol was seen.

Chairman KERRY. I do not want to be guilty of the, quote, debunk effort. I am not trying to. I am trying to get a sense of reality. I mean, what do you interpret this as? What would you say to this committee we ought to—how should we view this?

Mr. GADOURY. I have made a few notes on that subject, and if I could have just a few minutes, I would like to go through those notes.

Chairman KERRY. Fine.

Mr. GADOURY. First of all, I would like to preface my remarks about the USA letters in the rice paddy by saying that I am not a trained photo interpreter, but I have worked as an intelligence analyst, and I have worked very closely with trained photo interpreters and used information obtained from photography to make updates to national level defense intelligence data bases.

So, while admittedly I'm not a photo analysis expert, I do have extensive experience working with photography. And for several other reasons, which I will detail here, I believe that I have a unique combination of experiences which qualify me to comment on the USA and possible K symbols.

Please understand that I am not making this statement to promote any particular viewpoint, but only to share with the committee my own observations on the subject.

Elements of my own personal perspective on this include the following points. Point number one, during the Indochina conflict, I spent 2 years supporting air operations over Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia from the 388 Tactical Fighter Wing Intelligence Division where I was the noncommissioned officer in charge of the current intelligence branch. I used to brief new air crews on evasion symbols and their use.

Point number two is that I have seen the photography of the USA letters, which includes a nearby ground marking obviously man-made, which some believe could possibly represent an evasion symbol.

Point number three is that I have spent over 18 years working as an intelligence operations noncommission officer. In 1979, I was awarded an associate's degree in intelligence and imagery analysis from the Community College of the Air Force.

Point number four, in April of this year I, along with yourselves, Senator Kerry, and Senator Smith, Senator Grassley, and also Senator Brown was there, visited the area of the rice field in question and talked to—personally talked to—assisted you, Senator Kerry, as an interpreter, and Senator Smith, to talk to residents of that area.

Point number five is that I, personally, have worked in rice fields in Southeast Asia, and otherwise have a more than passing familiarity with rice harvesting techniques.

If I could just go back and expand a little bit on a few of those points, I would say that during my assignment with the 388 Tactical Fighter Wing at Korat Royal Thai Air Force Base from September of 1972 to September of 1974, I taught the intelligence portion of the weekly—what we called the new guys school for newly assigned air crew members coming in. Part of that training included briefing them on the current symbols and how they were used. The two that were in effect at the time were a modified T which, as I recall, was the primary symbol, and a modified K, which was a secondary.

These symbols were classified to ensure that they did not fall into enemy hands to use as a decoy to lure our rescue forces into an ambush. It was understood that if they were used or otherwise compromised, a new symbol would go into effect. During the entire time that I was the escape and evasion instructor at the 388 Tac Fighter Wing, neither of the symbols were used or compromised. I briefed them to the new air crews every week for almost 2 years.

Another point I would make is that I have looked at the January 1988 photography of the rice field at south of Sam Neua, and what I personally see in the photography, is very clear, distinct, dark letters—USA. It is my opinion that the letters appear very dark because the soil has either been turned over or dug out.

Going through the letters is a foot path which leads to two large piles of rice straw in locations coincident with what some have claimed were the legs or the appendages of the modified K symbol. The foot path which, from a perspective above is clearly in the shape of a Y or of a K without the lower right segment. In contrast the USA letter was noticeably lighter. It is apparent that the soil has not been turned over and, in fact, the line segments appear to be foot paths.

This photograph was taken in January, only a month or so after the rice harvest. The technique for harvesting rice in that part of the world is to cut the ripened dry stalks with a curved knife, tie the stalks with bamboo strings into bundles, and then stack the bundles. Bundles from nearby rice fields are usually carried to one central point where the rice is later threshed by hand.

There are several techniques for separating the rice grains from the stalks, but in this part of Laos, as I have observed, the popular method is to tie the bundles to the end of a stick and to beat them on a plastic tarp or cloth which has been laid on the ground to catch the rice. Later, the rice is put in bags or baskets, and the rice straw is stacked to be used for cattle or water buffalo feed.

The photograph shows two large stacks of rice straw alongside of each of the two foot paths which were apparently made by the farmers walking back and forth with their loads of rice bundles.

I am probably more familiar with rice fields and rice growing techniques in Southeast Asia than most Americans, since I have lived and worked in Thailand or Laos for more than 10 years. I have traveled extensively throughout this region where rice is the main crop.

Methods of planting and harvesting vary from one area to another, but the basic techniques are similar. My wife is from Northeast Thailand. She owns several acres of land on which rice is culti-

vated. I personally have spent time helping my brother-in-law plant and harvest rice from his fields.

In April of this year, I visited the area where the USA letters were seen in 1988, and I would refer you back to the text of the report that we filed subsequently, which we have already discussed. That concludes what I have to say.

Chairman KERRY. If I could just clarify one thing, and then I will turn to Senator Grassley. You told me that you were struck by the fact that this person who had been involved with POW searching and had operatives working asked for satellite imagery to be taken of this area. Is that correct?

Mr. GADOURY. At the time, we did not—we had no information about the USA letters in the field.

Chairman KERRY. I understand that. But at that time, the person said, we would like to have some satellite imagery taken in this area, or something to that effect?

Mr. GADOURY. He provided information about—which he stated was from his contacts, about an American, an alleged American POW being held in the area south of Sam Neua. It was a few days later, when he called back to see if I had any feedback on that or what was being done—he said that he was willing to cooperate, but he wanted to have access to intelligence information, including the overhead photography of that area.

Chairman KERRY. Subsequently, the photography was taken for other purposes. I am asking this because I am trying to put this into context. I do not know what happened, and I do not know that the committee can maybe draw a conclusion. But this individual, whose name is Mr. Al Shinkle, was asked to come and testify today. We provided a ticket, paid for. It is waiting in the Bangkok airport. He was supposed to have been here today. He is on the list, and he is a no show for his flight. I regret that, because I would have liked very much to have asked him a lot of questions about this kind of thing.

But it is fair to say—and I just want all of the things on the table here—this could have been made by a prisoner. It could have been dug out as a distress signal, as you have said. That is one possibility, correct? But you are also considering another possibility that this could have been a ruse by a group purposefully in order to try and excite interest and so forth. Is that also one of the things that you have considered?

Mr. GADOURY. I would respond that there is no evidence to show that there is a connection. However, the coincidence of the timing and the coincidence of the location would, I think in any reasonable mind, at least raise the question—

Chairman KERRY. The question mark.

Mr. GADOURY. There could be a possibility of a connection.

Chairman KERRY. That is all I am suggesting. That is one question—I mean, when you make analysis—I think the point we have to make here is, you do not just look at a photograph and see something, and that is the full measure of the analysis, correct?

Mr. GADOURY. Right.

Chairman KERRY. Good intelligence process, from what small amount I remember from my years—and I was not an intelligence officer, but I remember talking with them and fighting with them

as we were talking about targeting and things—was that there is a totality that they have to take into account. That the picture is one piece of it, but if you also know you have got 10 people right on the ground in the location and all 10 people tell you something other than what the picture says, you have got a very different analysis than if you had only had the picture. Does anybody disagree with that?

Nodding heads are hard to record. Is that no?

Mr. ANDREWS. We all agree, I think.

Chairman KERRY. You all agree. All right. So, all I am getting at here is that we have to weigh all of this. You have got this mysterious thing. You have got different things happening. Now, what is the likelihood? Give us a sense of this.

I mean, most people sitting here listening do not know what Sam Neua is like. We have been there; we had a chance to visit it. With these Europeans moving around, Caucasians moving around, different groups, et cetera, what is the likelihood of people being held in that vicinity? Is this something we should consider likely? Is it something that we cannot measure? Is there any way to measure that? Do you weigh that at all?

Mr. GADOURY. I would hesitate to speculate on degrees of likelihood, or possibilities, or probabilities. But I think that it is probably fair to say that while there may be a possibility, the fact that—the symbol was located very close to Route 6, just south of town, it would indicate that—in my opinion, if there was something there, other people in the nearby area would know about it. But, again, I wouldn't speculate on what the probabilities are.

Mr. ANDREWS. It never can be answered in the absolute. But taking that all-source picture, and what we have been able to do to follow up on this image when it came to our attention, we have no reason to believe at this time that it is, in fact, an evader symbol. We haven't ruled that out, and we continue to examine and look for answers, but it doesn't jump out at us as that's the only answer that there is. We believe that there are other more likely answers, and we will be aware of all the story when we make judgment.

Chairman KERRY. One final question, then I will turn to Senator Grassley. But to take the other side of the argument, in fairness, there is no question that this is man-made, person-made; no question that it is there; that it was there in a moment in time; no question that other people who have been talked to did not see it, but we know that it was there, so that does not obviously mean that something else could have missed their vision also. So, we are really left with a great big question mark. Is that correct?

Mr. ANDREWS. That is correct.

Chairman KERRY. Senator Grassley.

Senator GRASSLEY. I will start out with what we just left off with, just to clarify points, not to ask questions.

Mr. Gadoury said that there was no evidence that Mr. Shinkle did this, and I want to clarify that, since that is on the record. There is no evidence that he did this. Of course, just an observation. If there was a ruse here on the part of Mr. Shinkle or anybody else, the fact that it took 12 months to read this out seems to me that it is a pretty poor ruse, if that was the motivation. I think

maybe, bottom line, you know, the fact that it is a ruse just does not hold water.

Also, I think I want to make the point about the fact that—statements by Nick Rowe that he was not tightly confined have to be thrown in here as we consider pictures that were taken 15 years later, that there is evidence that the longer people—at least some evidence that the longer people were held in captivity, the less tightness of custody or the closeness of guard became. The mere fact that we know, in many instances, we have had reports that people had to work to make sure that they provided for their own care, their own sustenance.

Mr. Dussault, you made a statement I want to follow up on, that the CIA has the authenticator files, based upon the fact that they were the depository toward them. True?

Mr. DUSSAULT. That was the best recollection that I had of going through the material that relates to the IPWIC.

Senator GRASSLEY. Has the CIA been asked to provide the list?

Mr. DUSSAULT. Yes, sir. I personally contacted the CIA on three or four occasions last week, I believe.

Senator GRASSLEY. Have they provided the list?

Mr. DUSSAULT. Sir, they are not aware that they even have that list. They looked for it. They could not find it.

Mr. GADOURY. Could I add a brief response to that?

Mr. DUSSAULT. Yes, sir.

Mr. GADOURY. I am aware that the Joint Casualty Resolution Center, when they were formed in 1973, asked organizations units to send forward records of individuals who were missing from their units.

I was at, as I indicated earlier, the 388 Tac Fighter Wing. When a new person came into the unit, one of my duties was to provide him with a personal, authenticated card which he then filled out. That personal authenticated card included his photographs, his fingerprints, four sets of questions and answers which he made up so that only he would know the answers to, and a personal authenticator number.

The intended purpose for those questions and answers and the number was so that if he was shot down, if helicopters were going in to pick him up, before they picked him up, to ensure that they weren't being decoyed in by enemy forces, they would authenticate with the individual, just to ensure that they were going after the right person. We kept those records on file at the 388 Tac Fighter Wing, and I'm sure other units did the same thing.

It was 1973 when the files of these missing Americans, unaccounted for Americans, were called for from the different units to be assembled at JCRC. It's my understanding that the files that were sent forward from different units throughout the Indochina area were incomplete. We didn't get all of the records that we were seeking, but we do have many of the original personal authenticator cards on file for some of the cases.

Senator GRASSLEY. Mr. Dussault, tell me your information about these being with the CIA.

Mr. DUSSAULT. Yes, sir. I just saw a memo that was a minutes from the IPWIC committee meeting back in the 1973 or 1974 time-frame that indicated that all of the services were tasked, as a

result of that meeting, to forward their authenticator information to the CIA because the CIA was identified as the repository for that information. That's all I remember seeing.

Senator GRASSLEY. Do you know if our committee has that memo?

Mr. DUSSAULT. I believe they do. I think it was one of the items that we forwarded up to the committee.

Senator GRASSLEY. Well, then, I think Mr. Chairman—

Mr. DUSSAULT. I'd have to go through that material again to find it.

Colonel BONN. Senator, I saw the memo also at the time I was reviewing documents before we sent them over.

Senator GRASSLEY. Well, the more we are saying here the better it is because that means that that must—that information from the CIA must be provided. That is my judgment.

Mr. ANDREWS. Senator, it may not exist with the CIA. This was a memo that was dated back in 1973, and just reflected a working group's decision that that's where it should be sent. There's no indication that we have that they ever were responsible for maintaining a database. Is that correct?

Mr. DUSSAULT. That's correct.

Senator GRASSLEY. Well, I guess my point is, if we have reason to think they have it, then we ought to have proof that they do not have it. And if they do have it, we ought to have it.

Mr. GADOURY. The Joint Task Force does maintain a data base called the Bright Light System in which the personal authenticator number is one element of information, biographic information, which is maintained.

Mr. DUSSAULT. Do they have that on everybody, all the services?

Mr. GADOURY. As I have indicated only on the people whose records were forwarded intact, not everybody.

Senator GRASSLEY. A couple of points for Mr. Andrews—not for you to comment on, but just so there is a different point of view on the record. And that would be, based upon people on our committee who have seen both the photos as well as the drawings, there is a question about the accuracy of the line drawings to the photo.

The second point I would make is in reference to your opening comment about visits to prison camps—not camps, prison caves. Prison caves as opposed to just caves or just prisons. But in regard to visits to prison caves, we do not have anything in our files supporting U.S. investigators' visiting prison caves. And also I want to clarify, in addition to our files, as far as we know, anything in DOD files that would justify a statement that we visited prison caves.

Mr. ERICKSON, in regard to the Dong Mang photos—1992. In these photos that both have looked at, Mr. Erickson, did your office review the photographs taken in 1992?

Mr. ERICKSON. We only saw them in the Senate building for a short period of time.

Senator GRASSLEY. OK. You said in your deposition you thought that you saw some numbers in the fields near the prison, but that when DIA, quote, took them back to their facility and looked them over in detail, they were not, they were shadows. They blew them up and they just disappeared. And I thought I had something there, so, poof.

Mr. ERICKSON. We saw the photo during one of the closed sessions. I only saw the photo for a short period of time but I saw some apparent letters and numbers that appeared to be similar to the ones I saw in the other photos, so I pointed them out to the CIA representatives and asked if he could do anything better with those to enhance those. And he said, yes he could, and he'd get back to me, and he did. He came back to me with enhanced hard copy of that particular area, and I could see nothing there.

Senator GRASSLEY. So, DIA blew them up and they just disappeared?

Mr. ERICKSON. CIA.

Senator GRASSLEY. CIA, and they just disappeared?

Mr. ERICKSON. Yes. And I saw them again, the same photo, at DIA, and I looked at it on the light table to reconfirm my curiosity.

Senator GRASSLEY. Then as far as the CIA is concerned, they put them on the light table and they just disappeared too?

Mr. ERICKSON. I don't know what the CIA did with them.

Senator GRASSLEY. No, DIA, now, on the light table.

Mr. ERICKSON. Yes, they gave me the film and I looked at them on the light table, and I couldn't see them. They gave me the stuff and taught me how to use the light table.

Senator GRASSLEY. Mr. Dussault, did you also think that you saw a name faintly scratched in the field?

Mr. DUSSAULT. Yes, sir.

Senator GRASSLEY. Without telling us the name, did you try to match it with the names on the missing list?

Mr. DUSSAULT. About 3 days later, yes, sir. At first I didn't realize it was a name.

Senator GRASSLEY. Did it match any names?

Mr. DUSSAULT. To my recollection, it did.

Senator GRASSLEY. But this also disappeared when the DIA and CIA used other technology like blowing it up or putting it on a light. Is that correct?

Mr. DUSSAULT. Yes, sir.

Senator GRASSLEY. Did you also see numbers above and below the name?

Mr. DUSSAULT. I looked at that entire photograph for numbers, letters, everywhere, but I didn't see—but in one small area, i.e. that field outside the front gate of that facility three items: a number, some letters, and some numbers again.

Senator GRASSLEY. Did you see, 72 TA 88?

Mr. DUSSAULT. Yes, sir. To my recollection that's what I saw.

Senator GRASSLEY. How did you interpret that?

Mr. DUSSAULT. At first, my first interpretation of that is—72 was the year the guy went down. TA was his E&E code letters. And 88 could have been the year he arrived there or the year he left. And that was my interpretation. I don't know if that's even close. That's just speculation.

Senator GRASSLEY. Who is supposed to detect the numbers, aircraft?

Mr. DUSSAULT. I'm not following that.

Mr. ANDREWS. First of all, numbers like that were not any standard practice for anybody. If you're talking about the symbols, like an A or a T or a K, it would be aircraft or any surveillance system

that would be able to try to locate somebody. The whole idea is, when you have surveillance aircraft, if you had a downed flier, and then you go in and mount a SAR rescue operation, they need to have some way of finding him. And if the radios aren't working, then they look for symbols.

Senator GRASSLEY. Well, that is my point. Who is supposed to detect the numbers? Aircraft, to save people, are to detect the numbers, right?

Mr. ANDREWS. Not the numbers, sir, the symbols. The numbers were never intended to be put out on the ground.

Senator GRASSLEY. Well, anyway, numbers or whatever symbols. Then it seems to me like if aircraft are supposed to detect these, blowing it up kind of misses the point. You also need to use other techniques. That is my point.

Mr. Dussault, on page 79 of your deposition, you said that the CIA analysts also saw these letters and numbers, but when they looked at it on the light table, they told you they disappeared.

Mr. DUSSAULT. That's correct.

Senator GRASSLEY. Do you think it is odd that shadows or photo anomalies, as DIA and CIA call them, just happen to match names of MIAs?

Mr. DUSSAULT. Probably more on that photo than any other that I have ever seen primarily because I only had three numbers in the entire photograph. And that still is a question in my own mind.

Senator GRASSLEY. When you saw 72 TA 88, did it match a person that was missing?

Mr. DUSSAULT. Sir, again, we are talking a year, two letters, TA—and those are E&E code letters that applied during 1972.

Senator GRASSLEY. When you found the name, though, did it match when that person went down?

Mr. DUSSAULT. Yes, sir.

Senator GRASSLEY. Mr. Andrews, I want to ask about Morse code K. DIA determined that the Dong Mang facility was a reeducation center, yet the CIA analysis shows it to be one of the most secure facilities that they have seen, and we have had reference to that in the CIA memo. Can you back up your assessment and indicate to us why the CIA's analysis is wrong?

Mr. ANDREWS. Senator, as I said in my statement and in subsequent questions already, that initial analysis was their best estimate at the time. This was made prior to the extensive interviews we have had of inmates of the facility where we got a lot more information on the security and the nature of the facility. That's our best judgment.

Senator GRASSLEY. Either Mr. Erickson or Mr. Dussault, was Morse code used during the war?

Mr. DUSSAULT. I don't believe Morse code—in my recollection, Morse code could have been used. I'm not aware of the fact that it was used or not used.

Colonel BONN. Sir, as an air crew member during the war, in pilot training we were taught Morse code for the purposes of—

Senator GRASSLEY. Well, were pilots taught to use Morse code for distress signals?

Colonel BONN. I wasn't, sir.

Senator GRASSLEY. Mr. Erickson or Mr. Dussault?

Mr. ERICKSON. It was on their survival radios. And they were told that if they had a broken jaw or for whatever reason couldn't speak, they could key the button on the radio to emanate Morse code.

Senator GRASSLEY. Was laundry on a clothesline, for instance, in Morse code ever used?

Mr. DUSSAULT. Sir, we're getting into that area. It wasn't Morse code, but that's all I'm going to say.

Senator GRASSLEY. This is an area that you cannot talk about because of security?

Mr. DUSSAULT. Yes, sir. We want to provide the best capabilities for our men in the future.

Senator GRASSLEY. OK, I accept that. Mr. Andrews, there was the roof construction work going on at this facility. Why would not possible prisoners be used for construction labor?

Mr. ANDREWS. I don't think that's what we found to be a common practice, but you can't rule out anything Senator. It's just that that is not our judgment. We had no indications that there were any prisoners, American prisoners, being used in that facility. And as you can see by the image, it is a very tenuous call to start with.

Senator GRASSLEY. The CIA analysis states that it was odd the way the roof was being constructed. The analyst states that it is a remote possibility that this is a distress signal. Yet, it is understandable that any analyst would say this if the policy was we left no one behind. I think the analyst reported this because it was unique and it was, therefore—it remained, possibly, a distress signal even though that was counter to policy.

Mr. Andrews, I am going to ask you a series of questions to get your expertise on the record. Once it is on the record, I would like to closely evaluate your responsibilities.

What systems generally collect images? Satellites, reconnaissance aircraft, drones, humans with cameras, radar satellites, radar aircraft, commercial and secret infrared satellites, reconnaissance aircraft that build pictures from heat images? And I suppose there are even others that we cannot talk about. Does that all fit into that category of what can collect images?

Mr. ANDREWS. Senator, we are stepping over the line. I am not going to address that subject here in this open hearing.

Chairman KERRY. Yes, let us not.

Mr. ANDREWS. I would be happy to address it in a closed hearing Senator.

Senator GRASSLEY. Can you answer this for me? Were any systems available for collection in 1988 that are not available for today?

Mr. ANDREWS. Not that I can recall.

Senator GRASSLEY. What about the SR-71 strategic photo reconnaissance aircraft, as well as number of U.S. Air Force Pacific Command aircraft?

Mr. ANDREWS. Well, a lot of our reconnaissance aircraft have been brought back to the United States. The SR-71 was in its—I think that was its last year.

Senator GRASSLEY. So there were some that were available in 1988 that are not available today, right?

Mr. ANDREWS. I guess the SR-71 is one that was possibly available.

Senator GRASSLEY. How does the product of all these systems compare with the kinds of systems that we had at Operation Homecoming?

Mr. ANDREWS. Again, Senator, I think that you are beginning to go over the line. If you want a thorough discussion of the capabilities of our systems, I would be happy to do that in closed session.

Senator GRASSLEY. Which systems made these photos.

Mr. ANDREWS. Well some of those—most of these photos that we have up here are artists' conceptions, Senator. I think that you have a selection of ground photos and you have some satellite photography here. And we pointed out, when we were presenting our briefing, an image from an unmanned reconnaissance drone.

Senator GRASSLEY. Without violating our security, can you tell us how the process works so that the American people can have some understanding of the technology?

Mr. ANDREWS. Well, sir, I think I went as far as I could go in my opening statement, and I think it was a—I think it's a lot more detail on our process than we've laid out previously, and I can't go any further than that.

Senator GRASSLEY. Are there any photos or images from any other systems?

Mr. ANDREWS. I would have to do some research, Senator, but I don't want to get into a discussion of any other systems here. In terms of these photos and images, you are seeing and we have talked about today what is in our holdings. Every image that I am aware of that we have taken, we've analyzed and the committee has been made aware of, and we've talked about today.

Have I personally gone through every can of film in the SR-71? No, I haven't. But we have looked at all images that have come to our attention. Every image I am aware of, Senator, we have talked about.

Senator GRASSLEY. How often do POW-related targets get their pictures taken?

Mr. ANDREWS. I think, Senator, to get into a discussion of that, we would have to be in closed session.

Chairman KERRY. I think we have actually been through some of that previously, but I concur that we ought to hold that.

Senator GRASSLEY. Let me take just a break here. [Pause.]

Senator GRASSLEY. Mr. Chairman, I am going to quit my questioning now.

Chairman KERRY. OK. Thank you very much, Senator. I think Senator Smith has a few wrap-ups here, and I just want to clarify one thing. When Senator Grassley was questioning you about a 72, and an 88, and a TA, and a name that you said matched an MIA/POW that was subsequently further analyzed, is that correct—you saw that?

Mr. DUSSAULT. That is correct. It was subsequently looked at by CIA.

Chairman KERRY. What did the subsequent analysis show, Mr. Secretary?

Mr. ANDREWS. We have no indication of any unusual man-made artifacts on the imagery.

Chairman KERRY. On that imagery?

Mr. ANDREWS. Right.

Chairman KERRY. Now, so that we understand—well, I think the record is clear on that. Senator Smith?

Vice Chairman SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have several different questions to bounce around to various people.

Mr. Erickson, regarding the information that was brought out regarding the path—I think Mr. Gadoury brought it out. The path leading from the USA to the alleged K. Either you or Mr. Dussault, tell me if in fact that were a rice paddy, and someone wanted to do a signal in that rice paddy, and it was rice, what would you—tell me, what would you train them to do? What do you train those people to do so that they would not be noticed or picked up by their captors or those in the area who may be trying to capture them?

Mr. ERICKSON. Are you talking about constructing a signal while under guard?

Vice Chairman SMITH. No, not necessarily under guard. But let us say, maybe they are under guard, working in a rice paddy, or they are not under guard, and they are escaped, and they are trying to put a signal, would you ask them to use natural objects as much as possible to make a signal?

Mr. ERICKSON. That would be all they'd have on hand, natural materials. But if they had tools, like if they were working in the rice paddy—

Vice Chairman SMITH. Did you ever specifically train them to use stalks of rice to make a signal?

Mr. ERICKSON. We may have mentioned stalks of rice in passing, but in training we generally used grass, which is basically the same thing—elephant grass. We have scraped such signals in meadows.

Vice Chairman SMITH. So, in fact, if someone wanted to—if that were an escaped pilot and they wanted to make a signal, and they were to cut rice or take rice out of the rice paddy and make a signal, for example, the USA, and they wanted to utilize the natural materials to provide another signal, that K could have been constructed from rice, from stalks of rice, and that would be consistent with your training. Is that correct?

Mr. ERICKSON. You could speculate, yes, that would be consistent with training.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Mr. Gadoury, going back to the situation in the Sam Neua area regarding the possibility of a missing American and the linkage to one of the POW activists, in the message sent back at the time—I believe it was 1988. I am not sure of the timeframe of the message. You said, on your conversation with the representative of Skyhook II, clearly two possible locations of the POW. You are saying it was the Sam Neua location, are you not? Is that what you are saying?

Mr. GADOURY. The area south of Sam Neua.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Right. But are there not two possible locations of the POW, alleged POW in question here, neither of which was Sam Neua?

Mr. GADOURY. I am not sure which locations you are referring to.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Well, in the letter referencing that case, 22 January 1988 from Air Force Headquarters, regarding the DIA

comments on the JCRC report which is in question here, I am quoting out of that report, and I will leave out the name of the town. Maybe it is classified. It probably should not be used. I will leave it out.

The location where the American was supposedly moved is characterized as, quote, 5-days walk southeast of blank, 9 turns. While we were able to locate a town, blank, in Eastern Laos, the statement 5-days walk southeast, unquote, combined with the phrase 9 turns, the meaning of which eludes us, makes it virtually impossible to determine the location of the alleged American.

Mr. GADOURY. Mr. Shinkle told me, in the conversation that we had in which he reported the information, that according to his sources the American that he was alluding to that was being held up there, was kept at a location 27 miles south of Sam Neua. And, in fact—he gave the bearing on the radial compass from Sam Neua. It was very specific. But he did mention that after that initial report, the individual had been moved, and the locations that he cited, at least, we were not able to find on the map.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Did Shinkle tell you that he wanted photography of any particular location?

Mr. GADOURY. When he called me back a few days later, he did not address a specific location, although from the context of what he was talking about then, in reference to the discussion that he had with me on January 6, it was clearly, implied, that we're talking about the same area and the same incident.

Vice Chairman SMITH. When you say same area, what do you mean? 5 miles? 50 miles?

Mr. GADOURY. The area was not defined in terms of miles or kilometers. He was talking in terms of the area around which his sources had reported was the location where the reported POW was being held.

Vice Chairman SMITH. One correction for the record, and you may not have known this. I do not mean to imply that you stated something intentionally incorrect. But the Kerry, Smith Codell did not land in the rice paddy in question, as you stated. In fact, we landed a couple of valleys away from it.

[The interchange between Senator Smith and Mr. Gadoury was classified.]

Mr. DUSSAULT. I need to clarify one thing. I do not think that I said I saw something on the ground. I saw something in the photography that's outside—on the photograph, outside that camp, that were letters. When I looked at those letters, the first thing that I thought of that we're talking about—not identifying themselves but talking about another subject that relates, OK? I got back 3 days later and checked. That five-letter word that I saw matched an individual's name.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Was that on the same imagery where the numbers were found? Was that in the approximate area?

Mr. DUSSAULT. What numbers are we talking about, sir?

Vice Chairman SMITH. The followup, the December 1988 followup imagery of the USA.

Mr. DUSSAULT. No, sir. That's not here.

Vice Chairman SMITH. All right. Was it anywhere near that area?

Mr. DUSSAULT. No, sir.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Different area?

Mr. DUSSAULT. This is the same camp where we had a suspected K on the roof.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Has that information been passed? Has that information that you—the basis that you say that it at least spelled out a name based on what you saw of a missing person, was that passed on to the DIA? Or is the DIA aware of it?

Mr. DUSSAULT. I think they are. Yes, sir. We talked about it. In fact, we worked through all of it, and they showed me basically in the analysis by CIA and DIA that that disappeared.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Has that information been passed on to the family, Mr. Andrews?

Mr. ANDREWS. Senator, the information didn't really exist. When we looked at the imagery, it was not there. There was no reason to pass it on to the family when it didn't exist.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Well, do we not pass on live sighting reports that you consider to be bogus to the families?

Mr. ANDREWS. Senator, we have reason—one, if it's a reliable—

Vice Chairman SMITH. Answer my question. Yes or no.

Mr. ANDREWS. Senator, the person that found the report agreed that it wasn't there. Yes, we do pass as much information as we can on to the families.

Vice Chairman SMITH. You pass on whatever it is, do you not? You pass on whatever it is, do you not? Bogus or not. Even if you determine it is bogus, usually you pass it on to the families, correct?

Mr. ANDREWS. When it's a real report, we pass it on to the families.

Vice Chairman SMITH. So the fact that a name appears on a piece of photography, whatever your conclusions about why it appeared, when that appears on there, a name or a number which identifies with a name, you do not pass that on to the family, that that appeared on that imagery?

Mr. ANDREWS. Senator, if there was not reason to believe that it was real, we would not pass it on to the families. We have 3 million people in the Department that could all see things, Senator.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Well, why would you pass on—Mr. Andrews, why would you pass on to the family a report that you determine to be bogus and a fabrication?

Mr. ANDREWS. Because it was in the file. We pass on as much information as we can. We then explain what we think of it.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Well, are you not contradicting yourself, with all due respect?

Mr. ANDREWS. No, I am not. No, sir. I'm not.

Chairman KERRY. Can I intercede here?

Vice Chairman SMITH. I find it a contradiction.

Chairman KERRY. Well, I think what Mr. Andrews said was that they did not see it on the photography. That it appeared to Mr. Dussault to be something, they looked at it, and it was not there. Is that accurate, Mr. Dussault?

Mr. DUSSAULT. Yes, sir.

Mr. ANDREWS. Senator, if we were to withhold—

Chairman KERRY. So there was nothing to pass on because it was not there.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Well, how do you see it if it is not there, Mr. Dussault? Answer me that question. That is one that I would really would like to understand.

Mr. DUSSAULT. Sir, I don't understand it, either.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Well, explain to me—explain it to me.

Mr. DUSSAULT. They explained to me that—

Vice Chairman SMITH. Never mind what they explained to you. I want you to explain to me how you saw something and then you do not see it. Did you see it, or not?

Mr. DUSSAULT. Yes, sir. I saw it with my eyes, and I think my eyesight's pretty good. But at the same time, I'm not a photo interpreter.

Vice Chairman SMITH. I am not asking you—I am not either, and I understand that.

Mr. DUSSAULT. And they tell me that that's an anomaly, and at this stage of the game I have to defer to them because they're the experts in that photographic process.

Chairman KERRY. Now, what we are going to do, we are going to come in with our independent person, all of us, we are going to sit down and look at it ourselves. We are not going to take any of this for granted, and that will give us a chance to make our judgment.

Vice Chairman SMITH. One other area that I want to ask regarding the rice paddy. The second photograph from the left is a photograph of a rice paddy. That is where we were. I do not—it was a fairly significant distance from—maybe—I do not know, 100 yards, maybe, to the woods. I am not sure. I do not recall. But assuming that rice paddy was well out away from wooded areas, there was nothing except what you see, the embankment there, and a number or what alleges to be a number or appears to be a number, appears in that rice paddy.

If there is nothing in the immediate vicinity of that rice paddy to create a shadow, what is it? Mr. Dussault?

Mr. DUSSAULT. Well, if I saw that happen—

Vice Chairman SMITH. Let us say I did not say number.

Mr. DUSSAULT. Right. If I saw a number in a rice paddy, and we looked at it on photography, we looked at it on a light table, and there was no rhyme or reason as to shadows because there were no bushes or trees nearby, I'd have to say OK, let's look at this as a legitimate signal of some sort. Let's look into it.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Now, there was just a slight conflict a few minutes ago—quite some time ago—in the testimony. I believe it was you, Mr. Erickson, who said that you saw on the photography what appeared to be numbers in rice paddies, is that correct?

Mr. ERICKSON. Correct.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Now, you said, Mr. Andrews, you did not, is that correct?

Mr. ANDREWS. I said when we looked at the imagery we did not see the numbers.

Vice Chairman SMITH. No, no. Did you say that you did not see numbers in what appeared to be rice paddies? Did or did you not see numbers in rice paddies?

Mr. ANDREWS. I have seen nothing that looked like numbers in rice paddies.

Vice Chairman SMITH. OK, and you say that you have, correct? On the prints?

Mr. ANDREWS. On the prints, Senator, I can see some numbers and letters that are artifacts of the print, and I've been a trained interpreter and worked in it for 7 years. I can see the X, I can see other things, but I also can see what causes them.

Vice Chairman SMITH. What causes any image that you see, X, a number, whatever, what causes it if there is nothing in the vicinity to create a shadow? I am asking.

Mr. ANDREWS. Senator, I don't agree there's nothing in the vicinity to create a shadow. There are artifacts on the image in the printing process, there are artifacts in the way that the ground is laid out. We would be happy to show you what we can when we sit down at the light table and show you what causes various things.

Sometimes, it's nothing more than the printing process, an artifact of the poor quality of the imagery. It happens all the time. This is not something new. Just as how do we explain the numbers in Utah and the numbers in Africa and the letters and the symbols? They are there because it's an artifact of the imagery.

Going outside and seeing something in a cloud doesn't make it real, even though it looks like it.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Well, Mr. Dussault, let me ask you a question. I just want to have one followup point and I am finished. If you saw this, what you saw, with your naked eye, no interpretation, you just saw it with your naked eye, based on your background, what you were trained to do, and what you trained pilots to do, if you saw that in 1969 during the war, if that came across your desk—which it did not, obviously—but if this did, what would have been your recommendation?

Mr. DUSSAULT. Sir, there was a plan in Southeast Asia. It was part of the evasion and escape plan that existed. The Joint Personnel Recovery Center was in charge of the E&E operations in Southeast Asia at that time. And their plan was if they saw a signal, the first thing that they would do then is send out another team to check out that signal, to do further intelligence collection to verify that signal.

If they came back and found out that they could not recon it because of weather, they'd send in a ground team to reconnoiter the area. And then, they'd respond, sir. So the next step would be for the collection.

Vice Chairman SMITH. All right. Final question, hypothetical, and I would appreciate the best answer you can give. Let us assume—and it is an assumption, I want to make sure it is a hypothetical assumption, I am not claiming it to be fact—let us assume that a number appears on a photograph. Let us assume that you cannot make any determination any way, shape, or form, that that thing was created by a natural object. Your analysts say there is nothing that we can find anywhere in any of the imagery in any way we analyze this, that in any way that this number that we see was made by natural objects.

You then see that number. What is going to be your recommendation if you cannot determine for sure that it was a man-made

object? What is going to be your recommendation? What are you going to do?

Mr. ANDREWS. Senator, we try not to deal with hypotheses.

Vice Chairman SMITH. I knew you were going to say that.

Mr. ANDREWS. Sir, I will offer you a personal opinion. We always, when we have reason to believe that something may be an indicator, we follow up, as Mr. Erickson says or as Mr. Dussault said. The first thing you do is go collect more information. So that's exactly what we would do. Until we could resolve it, we would follow up. And that's what we've done with these others.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Let me ask you this: If a number appeared on a photograph, and you determined with your analysts that it was a man-made number, and that number—this is an if. I am giving you a hypothetical. A man-made number, four digits, in the middle of a rice paddy. You see it on the imagery, you cannot get it off the imagery. It is still there. No matter what you do to it, it is still there. And that number correlates with a missing American prisoner of war or an American, missing American; what is your conclusion on those facts, as I presented them to you? Can you give me a conclusion on those facts as I have given them to you?

Chairman KERRY. Can I ask one other question on that hypothesis? Is this assuming it showed up now, or a photograph of 20, 15 years ago?

Vice Chairman SMITH. No, right now.

Chairman KERRY. Right now. OK.

Mr. ANDREWS. Senator, we would have to consider it in the all-source context. We would have to look at all of the possibilities.

Vice Chairman SMITH. What are other—I am really confused here.

Mr. ANDREWS. Anybody can go make a number, Senator, and it can correlate.

Vice Chairman SMITH. I did not say that. No, I did not say that. I did not say that.

Mr. ANDREWS. If there was a number on the ground that an escaped prisoner made and we detected it, we would not dismiss it until we had done everything we could to resolve what the case was.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Well, you may not be able to.

Mr. ANDREWS. Well—and that's our problem. So we keep it unexplained. It would immediately go on my unexplained list, Senator Smith.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Well, it sits on the unexplained list, what happens to the poor guy down there that is making the number?

Mr. ANDREWS. Senator, we do everything we can with the resources available to us to follow up on these various numbers.

Vice Chairman SMITH. I am finished, Mr. Chairman. I did ask a question of Mr. Gadoury on the cave and we got away from that. I just would like a response to that.

Mr. SANTORA. Senator, I would like to make a quick comment.

Chairman KERRY. Do you want to pull up a chair, would you be more comfortable?

Mr. SANTORA. Well, I'm only going to be a minute. Anything that's not seen on the original imagery, you know, when you start

making paper prints of the original imagery, then all bets are off. Anything is liable to happen. There can be problems with the reproduction, there can be two or three different things that come into effect, natural things on the ground that come into effect the same time to make it appear to be something different, to include the wind on a rice paddy.

But all I'm saying is when you're not looking at the original imagery and you're trying to detect something on anything else, any other form or copy of that imagery, then all bets are off on what you might see or might not see.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Well, yeah. That is the logical question. If the prints cannot be trusted—

Chairman KERRY. Would you state your name for the record again?

Mr. SANTORA. I'm sorry. Ralph Santora. I'm in the imagery division over at DIA.

Vice Chairman SMITH. If the prints cannot be trusted or if they are not reliable, why do you brief us on them? I mean, what do you take them for, if you cannot rely on a print?

Mr. SANTORA. Orientation purposes, sir.

Mr. ANDREWS. Senator, we never provided any prints to the committee to do photo exploitation. Never. And that's where we—as I said, what I will fault is that we didn't discover that this was happening earlier where we could have helped avoid the misunderstandings.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Well, I am just totally flabbergasted and baffled. I mean, we are supposed to believe what you show us on prints. If you need to prove something, you will show us a print and say it is a fact. But then if something shows up on the print that you say is not there, then you say it is not there and we cannot prove anything by it. I mean, I just do not understand.

If, in fact, there is somebody missing over there and if, in fact, they are trying to signal us with a number, I mean, the first thing we ought to do is cut—with all due respect to both of you gentlemen who I know are good, all of you, the point is what do we need this agency for? If we have signals and we are training people to do it, and then when we get the signals but we do not have the capability to determine whether it is a signal, it does not make an sense to me. I just do not understand it.

But anyway, I would like an answer to the cave question.

Mr. GADOURY. Could you please restate the question, Senator Smith?

Vice Chairman SMITH. The question was in the area of the walking K or the area of the USA-K, was there a cave or any other facility in that area that could detain or hide a human being or more?

Mr. GADOURY. In the area of the rice paddy in which the USA symbols were indicated and also the area where we landed, that was my first entry into that particular valley. I'm not familiar with the mountains in the area or whether or not there's any caves. But I do know from traveling throughout the Sam Neua-Viang Xai districts in Houa Phan Province that there are numerous caves in the karst formations, limestone formations, of which we've visited one cave in which a POW was held and we got some

information from a witness further to the east. But there are numerous caves in that area.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Just as a concluding comment, Mr. Chairman, the interesting thing is we have had some interesting chemistry here in terms of the dialog between ourselves, the Senators, and dialog between the witnesses and the committee, and, you know, it would be my position, if I were sitting in their position, which I am not, and I realize they have a difficult job, that if information like this was provided to me, I would want to take the position that these symbols should be treated as valid until proven as otherwise.

But that is not the position that has been taken here. The position that has been taken here is that these symbols are not valid. And the interesting thing about that is when you take all the other data which this committee has come up with over the past several months, and I do not want to go through it all, but very briefly, the testimony given by the 1973 folks who were on board DOD, Defense Secretaries, et cetera; you talk about lists of prisoners; you take the live sighting reports; you take the imagery that we have just been talking about; and you take Mr. Garwood and others; radio intercepts, you name it; you put all of that together, it is not like these things just suddenly appeared 20 years later after the war ended.

And I just am really—and I know it is tough and I know I work you over pretty good and you do likewise to me and that is fine. But the point is I just do not understand the attitude. To me, nobody ever said to this committee—let me just be very candid here—nobody said to this committee when we showed you this stuff, thank you. My God. We will take a look at that. Maybe we missed something. That is not what we heard.

What we heard was immediately circling the wagons, pulling everybody together, saying we will have one position on this. No one is to talk to the committee. We will have one position to the committee, and we are telling you now that that position is that those are not symbols and those people are not missing. And I find it outrageous that that is the way this issue is being treated.

You can shake your head all you want. But that is my position on it.

Chairman KERRY. Do you want to respond, Mr. Secretary?

Mr. ANDREWS. Senator, if I could, first of all, we do take them very seriously. When the USA came to our attention, we had an analyst on an airplane within a couple of days to Southeast Asia to try to follow up on actions that we could take to determine what was there. We collected additional intelligence information and continued that process.

We're now at almost—we're at an ending point, or at least in the later stages, of an analysis that began many years ago. Senator, when we started, we took these very seriously.

Vice Chairman SMITH. 15 years after the fact.

Mr. ANDREWS. We are now at a point where we are having to look at the all-source picture. We have to look at the total picture.

Vice Chairman SMITH. 15 years later, we looked at it.

Mr. ANDREWS. Senator, we've been looking at these. We looked at them in 1973 in this—in some of the images that we've talked about. We have looked at them periodically.

Vice Chairman SMITH. I apologize, Mr. Chairman. One final point.

Mr. Andrews, you did not—the people who were trained to teach this were never shown any imagery.

Chairman KERRY. But there is no reason to show—

Vice Chairman SMITH. There is no reason to show that?

Chairman KERRY. No, no, no, no. If the imagery analysts decide that it is not something, you do not show it to the people who have not been trained to discern the imagery to tell them it is something. If they decided it was something, there would be a reason to give it to them. But they have testified to us they found it was not something.

Now, the 1973 piece, they think might be something. They have testified to that. They looked at it in 1973, they looked at it in 1976.

Vice Chairman SMITH. JSSA did not look at it.

Chairman KERRY. They looked at it in 1985, they looked at it in 1986.

Vice Chairman SMITH. JSSA did not look at it.

Chairman KERRY. And again in 1992.

Vice Chairman SMITH. JSSA never looked at it.

Chairman KERRY. I understand.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Well, they are the experts.

Chairman KERRY. The way I understand it—

Mr. ANDREWS. Well, but they are not charged with that responsibility.

Chairman KERRY. It is my understanding they are not the experts on imagery.

Mr. ANDREWS. That's correct.

Chairman KERRY. Are you the experts on imagery?

Vice Chairman SMITH. They are not the experts on imagery. I did not say that.

Mr. DUSSAULT. No, sir.

Chairman KERRY. So if they did not discover something, should they have shown you what they did not discover?

Mr. DUSSAULT. They did discover.

Colonel BONN. Sir, the process that really ought to be happening is, like Mr. Andrews said, the photo interpreters ought to be discovering anomalies, and if they want outside expertise that they don't think they have then they can come to us and we'd be glad to comment all day on our expertise. Instead, we are asked to brainstorm on poor quality imagery about what could be there.

Chairman KERRY. Let me ask this question: When you looked at those prints and originally saw what you said purported to be some 19 different numbers, correct—

Mr. ERICKSON. Correct.

Mr. DUSSAULT. Yes.

Chairman KERRY [continuing]. What was the total area that you were looking at that 19 different numbers showed up in? This was the area of the USA?

Mr. ERICKSON. Two different photos.

Chairman KERRY. I beg your pardon?

Mr. ERICKSON. Two different photos.

Chairman KERRY. About what kind of area? What are we talking about? Just give me a sense, square miles.

Mr. ERICKSON. I really don't know, sir. It is a large area. The entire area of the USA photo and another one.

Chairman KERRY. Well, the entire area of the USA photo—

Mr. ERICKSON. Not that particular one, but we had an enlargement.

Chairman KERRY. Can anybody tell me? What are we looking at?

Mr. SANTORA. About 10 square kilometers, sir.

Chairman KERRY. So in 10 square kilometers, you originally thought you saw 19 different numbers, 19 different people in 19 square kilometers.

Mr. ERICKSON. That particular one with the USA was 10 square kilometers, plus there was another one. So it's a much larger area.

Chairman KERRY. OK. Yes, Mr. Secretary.

Mr. ANDREWS. Senator Kerry, the other point that Senator Smith made that I would like to respond to regarding circling the wagons and directed that everybody get in line. Senator, you contacted the Secretary and said that there appeared to be confusion in the Department and would he get that together. He asked me to get into it. It's at that time that I personally got involved in this.

None of the players, and you have deposed them on this particular subject, none of the players were asked or directed or forced in anyway to change their minds.

Vice Chairman SMITH. I did not say that.

Mr. ANDREWS. We simply brought them together so that we could better serve the committee. We're not circling the wagons. We want to get the information to you. We believe there's a good story to tell if we get the accurate information and not the incomplete information on the table.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Well, just a comment and a final point, I am sorry. First of all, let me ask you this. Is it your position that these symbols are—well, to use the term, is it your position that what you saw on the imagery is valid until proven otherwise?

Mr. ANDREWS. Yes, sir.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Is it your position, as well?

Mr. DUSSAULT. Yes, sir.

Vice Chairman SMITH. In reference to what Senator Kerry just said, you know, you guys take a beating in public. We all take a beating on this thing. But you know, the truth of the matter is you are PI's. You are photo interpreters, all right. They had no information, by their own admission under depositions, to this committee about distress signals until we told them about distress signals. They did not know what a distress signal was. How can a photo interpreter with photographs that are appearing over the last 15 to 18 years since this war ended, how in God's name do you expect those people to be able to tell you what they are seeing if they do not know what they are looking for?

There has been no communication here. Nothing. Photo interpreters were not told about distress signals. The people who taught the distress signals were not told that there was any imagery with it on it. It is outrageous. It is absolutely outrageous.

Chairman KERRY. Do you want to respond, Mr. Secretary?

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Chairman, our photo interpreters are trained to report what is on the image, not what they would like to see on the image. They are trained to report what is on the image and

they get together with analysts that are trained. The DIA analysts, the CIA analysts, are aware of what to look for.

There were no anomalies other than what we have talked about. So, you know, they are trained to report that way.

Chairman KERRY. Do you want to respond also, Mr. Santora?

Mr. SANTORA. Yes, sir, I would. You don't need to know that four numbers on the ground are an evader symbol to report those four numbers out. So if an imagery analyst sees those four numbers, or whatever—letters, on the ground he'll report them out through channels to the requester, you know, of the imagery.

Mr. ANDREWS. In fact, the possible K was reported out by an analyst that had no idea that that was an evader symbol.

Chairman KERRY. But he simply observed it, and on the basis of the observation, reported it.

Mr. ANDREWS. That's exactly right.

Mr. SANTORA. And there's one other point I'd like to make, and I think sometimes here a little bit we're forgetting, what's on the imagery is what's on the original imagery. Not what's on a print made from that imagery. So when we're talking about what's on the imagery, it's the original imagery, not some later product.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Well, that is one somebody is going to have to explain to me, why we take a picture of something and then do not see it. That does not tell me a hell of a lot about photography. If the analysts were not aware of the system that you are looking at, the analysts themselves were not aware of it, the photo interpreter is not aware of it, then they could not see it. How are they going to see what they do not know what they are looking for? They did not even know about it, guys, you know that. They are taught to look for things.

Chairman KERRY. Gentlemen, Mr. Dussault, Mr. Erickson, how long have you worked at SERE?

Mr. ERICKSON. Since 1967.

Chairman KERRY. And Mr. Dussault?

Mr. DUSSAULT. Yes, sir. Since 1968.

Chairman KERRY. So you guys were training an awful lot of pilots who went off to fight in Vietnam. And you are probably the two resident experts on this issue, is that correct? Of survival, escape, and resistance?

Mr. DUSSAULT. Sir, there are a couple of hundred experts in SERE, yes, sir.

Chairman KERRY. Let me just ask you now, so that the committee is clear, on what you observed on those prints which you thought were numbers originally, are you totally comfortable in your conscience and in your testimony and measured against all that you know is at stake here, are you totally comfortable that you do not believe they are numbers, that you see accurately that they are not what you originally thought? Are you comfortable with that, Mr. Erickson?

Mr. ERICKSON. All of those that I went back and looked at four-digit numbers dissolved. They were not there. I looked at what I thought I had, a Social Security number. It was a shadow cast over a trail by treetops.

Chairman KERRY. Do you feel comfortable with that, Mr. Dussault?

Mr. DUSSAULT. Sir, I really do not feel comfortable, but it is an area where I have got to defer to somebody else's expertise. I still in my own mind have questions as to how things can show up in photography, but they tell me it happens all the time. I've got to buy that.

Chairman KERRY. But at any rate, when you looked at one print and then looked at the original and the blowup, et cetera, you did not see what you saw.

Mr. DUSSAULT. Yes, sir. And what makes me uncomfortable is this, more than anything else, is I am not an expert in photography. I am not a photo interpreter. And I have got to, in that case, give faith to somebody else. But what bothers me is I will go into a room where there is a wall like that where there's a wall in a bathroom or something like that, and I will look straight at it and not see anything written on that wall. But if I turn a little bit to the left or I turn a little bit to the right, I now see something that's visible.

Now, that raises a question in my mind. Is the light table the optimum method to analyze ground signals? I don't know. I've been told over the years reflectivity has a lot to do with it, and right now, I trust those photo interpreters. They're telling me it's not there. But I still have questions, and that's what I want to relate.

Chairman KERRY. Fair enough. Yes, Colonel?

Colonel BONN. Senator, for the record, I would like to point out that neither Mr. Dussault or I participated in the weekend-long technological review of these images that Mr. Erickson did. I did not go by deliberate policy. I didn't want to have command, influence over it.

Chairman KERRY. And Mr. Dussault did not, either?

Colonel BONN. No, sir.

Chairman KERRY. Oh, you did not participate in it.

Mr. DUSSAULT. No, sir.

Chairman KERRY. Oh.

Mr. DUSSAULT. But I have seen basically the technique on Monday morning.

Chairman KERRY. Well, maybe it would be a good idea if you went and participated, and then you could share with the committee whether you are now comfortable or not? What do you think about that? We are going to go do it.

Mr. DUSSAULT. Well, I'm willing to do it.

Chairman KERRY. Well, I would have a lot more confidence in your answer knowing you had done it.

Mr. DUSSAULT. Sir, I went over there. I went to NPIC when everybody was there from the CIA, and I am comfortable with the experts standing up and saying it happens all the time. I'm willing to buy that right now. I don't need to go see it any more.

Chairman KERRY. Fine. Did you actually look yourself and not see it under those enhanced circumstances?

Mr. DUSSAULT. Yes, sir. I saw a couple of examples. I only used a couple. I don't have to look at every one.

Vice Chairman SMITH. I might just say, if you took a picture of this podium up here with that glass on it, you would see the glass. If you then took a series of pictures of the glass, you would not see me. You could focus on the glass, could you not?

Mr. DUSSAULT. That's if you blow it up, do you mean?

Vice Chairman SMITH. Yes.

Mr. DUSSAULT. Yes, sir.

Chairman KERRY. Well, I guess we will have to see whether you fake blowups or not. We will be in with our individual experts and we will check it out.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Well, Mr. Chairman, I did not say they fake them. Come on.

Chairman KERRY. Well, the inference is that they took a picture that left out something.

Mr. ANDREWS. Senator, we welcome that challenge.

Chairman SMITH. I did not say that. I said if you blow up—

Chairman KERRY. Well, I do not know what it means. If you say you blew up part of it and you would not see this, it is implying—

Vice Chairman SMITH. Sometimes you have to reduce a picture to get a clearer picture. If you take a photograph of someone and blow it up 10,000 times, you ask any photography studio—

Chairman KERRY. Let me ask you this—

Vice Chairman SMITH. Let me finish—any photography studio in America, and they will tell you if you blow up somebody's photograph far enough you will get to where you cannot see who it is and if you take it down a level you can see clearer who it is. And that is a fact, and I do not know a damn thing about photography and I know that much.

Chairman KERRY. Can we—I want to make certain that the public is not going to be left confused. And the committee will make certain that we will check this.

Vice Chairman SMITH. I am not trying to confuse them, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman KERRY. No, no, no. I am just saying generally—

Vice Chairman SMITH. Well, that is what you are saying. I am trying to confuse everybody. I resent it, Mr. Chairman. I will be very honest with you. I resent the comment.

Chairman KERRY. I am not suggesting, Senator, that you are. I am suggesting that the process here leaves everybody, myself included, sort of saying well, what happens if you blow it up? What happens if you shrink it? What happens if you have another enhancement? And that is precisely why I want to leave the public with the awareness that we are not going to simply sit here and accept any of the statements at simply face value, but we are going to go and learn for ourselves with our experts, and if we can reduce it and enhance it we ought to reduce.

If we can learn whether something happened here that is not appropriate, the committee needs to be able to make clear our methodology to the public so that people will not say well, they did not do this or they did not do that. So that the very question that the vice chairman has just raised about blowing up and leaving a portion out by virtue of the blowup, they will know that in fact we have checked that out. And I think it is good that we are going to do that, and I am very appreciative to Secretary Cheney and to you, Mr. Secretary, and the others for allowing us to do it, because I think it is the best way for us to be able to jointly come together and make some kind of a determination here.

Did you have anything else?

Vice Chairman SMITH. Just that Senator Grassley asked me to resolve this—you said there were inaccuracies in the memo from staff, and if there are, he wants the memo entered.

Chairman KERRY. Well, we cannot enter it now, because I cannot sit here at this moment with you and go through the inaccuracies. But we will go through them and we can leave the record open.

Vice Chairman SMITH. I might just say if that is a criteria for entering documents, if we have to screen each one for inaccuracies, there would be a lot of documents we would have to take out.

Chairman KERRY. Well, this one also has some problems with classification, and I just want to make sure that we are OK on it.

Vice Chairman SMITH. All right.

Chairman KERRY. But we will leave the record open and then we can go through it and make certain that we are in agreement on what we are putting in. And so we will just leave the record open as to that.

Do you have any more questions?

Vice Chairman SMITH. No.

Chairman KERRY. If not, we will try to set up our visit as soon as possible, obviously, with Senators' schedules, and I want to try to be able to include Senator Daschle, who has some background in it, who wanted to be part of it. So we will see if we can do that and jointly come together and kind of go through this. I think that will give the committee a much better ability to write a report and make some judgments about how this is done. So we appreciate it very, very much.

I want to emphasize also, you know, I support Senator Smith asking hard questions on this. The committee has got to get the answer on this. And I think we have both tried to flesh out different views on it to complete the record. But we get a broad sense of what is at issue, here. And I completely share his belief, and I think you do, that if you have got a question mark about something legitimately person-made, you have got to treat it with a presumption. Now, you have said you are doing that, and there are these two major question marks, one in 1973, one in 1988. And we need to treat it with that presumption.

Vice Chairman SMITH. And one in 1981.

Chairman KERRY. And one in 1981.

Vice Chairman SMITH. 52, which they do not agree with.

Chairman KERRY. Well, we are going to have some hearing on that tomorrow, and that will be the subject of a closed session to discuss that one. But you are absolutely correct. That does exist.

We are now just going to have a very brief panel. Senator Smith, in fact, was the one who suggested when we were over there, when you folks first mentioned that there were Mennonites in the area, we wanted to talk to them simply to find out what they knew or what they may have observed. I do not think they have—obviously, they have no expertise or anything to add, really, about the imagery itself, but I think the committee would be interested simply to learn from them what they did observe or see in that region and what experiences they had and shed some light on it.

So we will call the second panel, in the absence of Mr. Shinkle, and that will be a very brief panel, I think. Mr. Secretary, thank you.

Let me just say that I think this has been most informative and helpful. I know it has been sort of on the line. I know there are a lot of folks who would have preferred not to have had any of this in public. I think it has been helpful to have it in public. I think the committee is helped, I think the public is helped, I think families who do not understand what this means have been greatly assisted in really getting a view of it. And it is my sense that we have been able to do so without compromising, and I hope you share that belief.

Thank you.

Mr. ANDREWS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman KERRY. If we could just very quickly talk with Ms. Chagnon, Mr. Elder, and Mr. Rumpf, if I could ask you just to stay standing so we could have an affirmation from each of you, if you would.

Do you affirm that you will tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you, God?

Mr. ELDER. Yes.

Ms. CHAGNON. Yes.

Mr. RUMPF. Yes.

Chairman KERRY. If you could just very quickly identify yourselves, and I do not think you have opening statements, is that correct?

Mr. ELDER. If it would be helpful, I could give a little bit of background of who we are and why we are there.

Chairman KERRY. If you could just give us a little background so that the committee could have a sense.

**TESTIMONY OF DAVID ELDER, ASIA PROGRAM DIRECTOR, AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE; ACCOMPANIED BY JACQUELYN CHAGNON AND ROGER RUMPF, CO-FIELD DIRECTORS FOR LAOS AND VIETNAM, AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE, 1978-1981 AND 1986-1990**

Mr. ELDER. My name is David Elder. I'm the coordinator for the Asia program of the American Friends Service Committee, a Quaker organization founded in 1917 to provide relief in the time of war and an opportunity for the Quakers to give witness to their peace testimony. We have been working in Southeast Asia, particularly in Vietnam, since 1966. We've provided assistance, with U.S. Government permission, both in South Vietnam and in North Vietnam. The work in Laos began in 1973, at the time of the coalition government. We've provided assistance both to the Pathet Lao and the Royal Lao factions.

The American Friends Service Committee and the Mennonite Central Committee were the two Western nongovernmental organizations that stayed on in Laos after the Pathet Lao took over the government. Other organizations left, either of their own choice, or by pressure from the Lao authorities. We have had staff continuously in Laos since 1974, beginning with a program of training for

the use of sawmills, small sawmills that we've provided the Pathet Lao, and continuing with field directors on through that time.

With me are Jacquelyn Chagnon and Roger Rumpf, who have been our co-field directors for 7 years in the intervening time, from 1978 to 1981, and again 1986 to 1990. I, myself, have traveled to Laos more or less annually since 1980. There have been some exceptions. But my base is in Philadelphia, our national office.

Chairman KERRY. Let me just ask Ms. Chagnon or Mr. Rumpf, you were there what years, Ms. Chagnon?

Ms. CHAGNON. 1978 to 1981 and 1986 to 1990. However, I've been back and forth frequently in the intervening years two or three times.

Chairman KERRY. Do you speak the language?

Ms. CHAGNON. Yes, I am fluent in Lao, in speaking, reading and writing.

Chairman KERRY. And Mr. Rumpf?

Mr. RUMPF. As well. We should also add that we went there on a brief visit in 1983 and early 1986, as well as we served as the co-field directors for the Vietnam program for the American Friends Service Committee and traveled to Vietnam to carry out projects there.

Chairman KERRY. And what were the years of your time there?

Mr. RUMPF. 1978 to 1981 and 1986 to 1990, with brief visits in 1983 and early 1986.

Ms. CHAGNON. We are a couple.

Chairman KERRY. I apologize.

Ms. CHAGNON. That should clarify it.

Chairman KERRY. You were there, then, during the period of this imagery, is that correct?

Ms. CHAGNON. Yes.

Chairman KERRY. Were you in the Sam Neua area?

Ms. CHAGNON. I was, and Mr. Elder also.

Mr. ELDER. We were traveling together on a visit to Xieng Khouang Province and to Houa Phan Province.

Chairman KERRY. In what period of time?

Mr. ELDER. January 1988. January 21, I think, was the day that we drove from Xieng Khouang to Sam Neua, and then we went on in Houa Phan Province to a town called Xieng Kho the next day, came back to Sam Neua, spent a day there, and then came back to Xieng Khouang.

Chairman KERRY. Can you share with the committee and give us a sense of what traveling in 1988 was like then? I mean, would you see other Caucasians in Sam Neua?

Mr. ELDER. On that particular trip, there was a delegation, a UNDP delegation involved in roadwork that was making the same trip at the same time. We were a little ahead of them on the road. I think we just finished our lunch when they caught up with us.

Chairman KERRY. UNDP would have been the United Nations—

Mr. ELDER. Development Program. Yes.

Chairman KERRY. And how many people would there have been in that?

Mr. ELDER. There were two non-Lao, as I recall, and a couple of Lao staff.

Chairman KERRY. And would you travel? If you wanted to go somewhere you could go, or was it fairly restricted? I mean, give the committee a sense of it.

Mr. ELDER. The road journey was not an easy one, and coming into Sam Neua Province the first 15 kilometers I think took us about 3 hours to cover that terrain, the road was so rough. It gradually improved as we came into Sam Neua. On this particular stretch, there had been considerable road improvement. There were road works in process, there was some equipment alongside the road, and obvious signs of road repairs that had been made.

We did stop outside the town. I am interested in the map and I would like to see if I could identify exactly where we stood to take pictures looking down into the valley when we went in on that afternoon. But we were focused, admittedly, down toward the valley. We weren't looking back up the other way as we came.

But the driver we were with, a lightly armed escort, had a soldier with a pistol, as I recall, a sidearm of some sort. And they responded readily to our request to stop and allow us to take a picture. So going in, there was no sense that there was any particular problem with our being there.

Nor when we came back. As a matter of fact, we found, as usual, that communications did not work terribly well. We arrived. Some people were ready for us, others were not. There was no one official to receive us, and we were sort of drifting around for a while.

When we were in Sam Neua as a town, I walked from one end of the town to the other at different times during the day. We went to the marketplace essentially on our own. I don't speak Lao, but since Jacqui does she was able to converse with people fairly independently.

Chairman KERRY. Do you have anything you would like to relate with respect to that, Jacqui?

Ms. CHAGNON. When we stopped as we were proceeding into Sam Neua—

Chairman KERRY. So this imagery was actually taken, this shot that wound up showing the USA, was actually taken at the very time you were there?

Ms. CHAGNON. Exactly.

Chairman KERRY. Is that correct?

Ms. CHAGNON. Yes.

Chairman KERRY. You were in Sam Neua when that was taken?

Ms. CHAGNON. We were. And we were proceeding into Sam Neua presumably the day before. It was supposedly taken on January 21. We were arriving on the 21st. I'm sorry, it was taken on the 22nd. We were arriving on the 21st.

Chairman KERRY. You did not observe the actual USA?

Ms. CHAGNON. We did not observe anything that looked like that. We did take video. I took video from the high point of the road, where you can overlook the valley where Sam Neua is, and I have that with me. It's only about a minute and a half section.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Were you in that valley? Were you in that valley or that rice paddy specifically, do you know?

Ms. CHAGNON. I don't know exactly the pinpoint of that valley. I was in Sam Neua City.

Mr. ELDER. We went down that road. We went down that highway.

Ms. CHAGNON. But we went down the road.

Chairman KERRY. Route 6.

Ms. CHAGNON. Route 6, clearly, yes. Absolutely.

Chairman KERRY. That is up on the top of the hill, right?

Ms. CHAGNON. Yes.

Chairman KERRY. Looking down?

Ms. CHAGNON. Yes.

Vice Chairman SMITH. You saw no other Caucasians in the area other than yourselves at the time? I did not hear what you said.

Mr. ELDER. That's correct, except for the UNDP people who came in after us. They arrived later in the evening.

Ms. CHAGNON. I was told that there were some Soviets residing in the hotel. I don't remember seeing them or noting it.

Chairman KERRY. And you were able to converse freely with people within the village, et cetera?

Ms. CHAGNON. Within Sam Neua, I walked around independently, in the early mornings especially.

Chairman KERRY. Just talked to folks?

Ms. CHAGNON. Going to the market, talking to people, buying cloth, just trying to see the city. I had not been up there until that point. It was my first trip.

Chairman KERRY. In all the years that you were there, did you have the occasion to raise the subject of the potential of Americans being left behind?

Ms. CHAGNON. On one occasion, I did, and it was to—specifically to a Lao official, do you mean?

Chairman KERRY. Well, to anybody.

Ms. CHAGNON. To anyone. Oh, well, on one occasion I asked very specifically a person that was involved in the government in Xieng Khouang, where there apparently have been some pilots that were downed or men that were downed. As this was a current issue coming up a lot in the press, I asked if he had heard about it. He had. And I asked, are there any people that you know of that might be alive here? And he said no. This was somebody I felt very confident would give me an honest answer.

The only other occasion we had where someone raised it to us directly was when we were interviewing a woman in a place called Meuang Hom, which is a Hmong community. We were interviewing her because she had lived way up in the north in Sam Neua during the war. We were just interviewing her because we were interested in her story and what was going on in the village.

In the process of interviewing her on video for about 40 minutes, we asked her at the very end, have you ever met any Americans? And she said oh, yes, I did. And she gave us the year. And it was apparently one of the Americans that was shot down in Sam Neua.

Chairman KERRY. What year did she say?

Ms. CHAGNON. I'm sorry, I cannot remember that and I didn't get a chance to look at the video that we took. It is with the committee. It has been with the committee for over a year. I don't know if anybody has ever viewed it, but we have even the full interview with that woman if anybody's interested in seeing it.

Chairman KERRY. Well, obviously, we would like to pin down the time.

Ms. CHAGNON. This is a published video. This was a video done with some former American volunteers who used to be in Laos.

Vice Chairman SMITH. But it was before the war?

Ms. CHAGNON. Pardon?

Vice Chairman SMITH. Before the war—I mean, during the war.

Mr. RUMPF. The video was taken in 1986.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Right. But her comments about seeing a pilot.

Ms. CHAGNON. Yes. She saw a pilot down, and that was the only time that we had ever—

Vice Chairman SMITH. During the war?

Chairman KERRY. That is the only other time you heard about it?

Ms. CHAGNON. I believe it was 1968, but I would not want to say that 100 percent until I look at that video segment again.

Chairman KERRY. It would be helpful if you would share that with us.

Mr. Rumpf, what about you? Your observations?

Mr. RUMPF. I talked to a very few people about the issue of live POWs being held by the Government. And on each occasion people said there were no Americans being held in Laos. But it was not an issue that came up regularly. People did not raise the issue until late in our stay there in 1989 and 1990 when people started coming to our house in Vientiane claiming they had tapes, fingerprints, bringing us sometimes those kinds of materials, expecting some money in return. And that's the only time people really came up to us.

Chairman KERRY. Did they ask you for money, specifically?

Mr. RUMPF. Yes, it was implied in the discussion that they expected something from it. We only said we'd take it and give it to the U.S. Embassy. [Pause.]

I should say on maybe one occasion, too, I was sighted as a POW, and that was told to us by the U.S. Embassy in Laos, that at least on one occasion I had been reported as a POW.

Chairman KERRY. You personally were reported as a live sighting?

Mr. RUMPF. A live sighting had corresponded to where I was at the time.

Chairman KERRY. Corresponded to you, to your movements.

Mr. RUMPF. Yes. And they thought it was probably me. And that may have happened more often, but at least on one occasion we are aware of that.

Vice Chairman SMITH. In your travels over the years in Laos, do you feel that you have totally unfettered access to wherever you want to go, or are you with anyone who would be a person who—I do not want to say is watching you, but who would be at least aware of your whereabouts? Do you feel you could go anywhere you want to in that country?

Mr. RUMPF. We were able to go where we had projects and a purpose to go. We had to have clearance from the Government to go outside of the cities. Once we were out, we were able to talk to people, sometimes with Government officials around, often without.

Ms. CHAGNON. Our having Lao language skills allowed us to do an awful lot more, I believe, than most other Caucasians would have been able to do. It gave us occasions to have private conversations. Sometimes those conversations occurred as you were traveling in a vehicle, sometimes as you were just sitting around chatting and waiting for something to happen. It was very easy for us to just draw people off and have a private conversation.

Mr. ELDER. I was unable to do an accurate count, but I would say that our staff over the years have made over 100 trips to the different provinces of Laos, to almost all of them. The ones we didn't go to have been by our choice rather than by lack of invitation. We have had projects in well over 100 different villages scattered around northern Laos. I noticed your map because we had one up in our office in Vientiane with a certain amount of similarity in terms of flags putting up where our projects were. Admittedly rather few in Houa Phan and Xieng Khouang, although we did have in those provinces many more in Luang Prabang and Oudomsay and Luang Nam Tha.

Vice Chairman SMITH. If you could remove yourself for a moment from all of this information that you have heard here as you have sat here and also whatever you may have heard after the fact, or—well, let me correct that. If you could remove yourself from what you heard here this morning, did you ever hear any information from anybody regarding that, any indigenous person in Laos or anybody else who was in Laos regarding the USA?

Mr. ELDER. I did not. And I was interested in this morning's discussion because, as I said, we came back to Sam Neua. There were times of inactivity. I was walking around. The guest house is by the river. There is easy access, easy concealed access if anyone wants to get to us, get to the guest house. Both Jacqui and I walked around the different points. There seemed to be a number of opportunities. If anyone had information available at the time, it should not have been difficult because we were around over a period of 3 or 4 days.

Chairman KERRY. But obviously, somebody did it. I mean, we know that much. Some human made that.

Mr. ELDER. Yes, but if someone had wanted to pass it on in some way, it seems to me in retrospect there was opportunity. My particular—not being able to speak, speak Lao—my tendency when we went to a place would be to run up a hillside to get a picture looking down on the site of the proposed school or whatever we were working on. So again, it seems to me that there was ample opportunity for someone, had they been trying to get hold of us, to communicate in some way.

But that's also in retrospect. At the time, I was quite unaware. We were just walking around carrying out our business. My notes are of extensive discussion about how many children are in the school and what their background is and level of education and so forth. They have a lot of details of discussion of that sort.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Is that the same with both of you? Never heard anything about it one way or the other, short of what you heard here?

Ms. CHAGNON. Not about those specific letters. I would like to posit one other possibility. The gentleman here before us said that

there was one possibility of these being written by POWs, one being that it was a ruse by resistance people. Those letters could be Lao letters. The U is a baw, the S is either a raw or a haw depending on whether the top of the S goes up or down, and in this case it seems to be going up according to that imagery, but I can't say exactly. And the A could be a khaw, a high kh sound.

Seeing as how this is in Laos, I think we have to give that some consideration.

Vice Chairman SMITH. What would it say in Lao? Does it say anything?

Ms. CHAGNON. It could be abbreviations, it could be "baw raw khoi", which means "don't wait." It could be the abbreviation for those three words.

The other evening after I was shown the imagery, I was playing with these in terms of Lao letters. At home I have a Lao friend staying with us. And without telling her anything about what this was about, I asked what would these letters stand for if you saw them anywhere, and she immediately picked out "baw raw khoi." She said that means "don't wait." And I said well, why would somebody write that? Oh, she said, that's a romantic thing that two young people might do as we write "I love you" or something. You know, somebody might write something like "don't wait for me, baby." It doesn't make sense to me, but we have to give it some consideration. This is Laos we're talking about.

By the way, the same thing could be said about the 52. I've never seen the 52 before, but you could make Lao letters. I remember when I first learned Lao lettering, "raw" or "haw" looked like the S or a 5, the 2 could be a low kh sound, and very clearly that's how I remembered that letter, was by the number 2 when I was first learning to read and write.

Chairman KERRY. I know this is just positing, but that is helpful to the committee to try to get all perspectives on this. You have had a lot of experience, a lot of years in Laos. That is a lot of time moving around the country, 100 projects around the country, et cetera. What is your judgment about the possibility that knowing the lifestyle, the life, what their goals are politically, et cetera, what do you believe is the possibility that somebody is being held?

Mr. RUMPF. It's very hard to posit an answer. The only thing, it seems to me, having traveled around the country and seeing how people live in the countryside, if they were living as local people were living, life would be very difficult. And for myself to live like local people in the remote villages, I would say I would not last for 10 years, for me to survive without medicine, without adequate food, and other things I am used to. A 10-year period would be very difficult.

Chairman KERRY. Do you agree with that, Ms. Chagnon?

Ms. CHAGNON. Yes. You can contract many more diseases and problems in the remote areas of Laos than you would ever have in Vientiane.

Chairman KERRY. And the only way to survive, in your estimation, would be to be living rather high off the hog compared to them?

Mr. RUMPF. Right.

Ms. CHAGNON. It would be most difficult for a non-Lao person.

I would also like to say that I don't know 100 percent, but I think after so many years someone would have given us something that would be more concrete at this point, but we've got nothing to offer.

Chairman KERRY. At any rate, in your years, no one has ever come to you with a secret key and offered or whispered to you that up here there are some Americans. You have never heard that. Nobody has ever—

Ms. CHAGNON. Only the incidents that Roger mentioned in Vientiane, which were very much secondhand stories. We turned over all information to the U.S. Embassy. And those did not prove to be valid.

Chairman KERRY. How many AFSC personnel are in Laos today?

Mr. ELDER. Our field directors are there. We had another couple that's just returned, but there normally are four expatriate personnel and a number of Lao staff.

Chairman KERRY. And how many different projects are you now working on?

Mr. ELDER. I would guess that there are about 30 under active attention at this point.

Chairman KERRY. With people traveling to those areas even at this moment?

Mr. ELDER. Yes. The second couple we have are engineers, and they have been living in Luang Prabang simply for greater access to the projects in the north. But they were also developing the projects in Xieng Khouang and on this last trip to Laos went to Nong Het, where I might add I was offered 10 kilograms of bones for \$8,000 with dog tag identification, if I could come up with that. And our field director passed that information on to the American Embassy. I noted the name and the number and so forth. But that proved to be, I think, a very live infantryman who has not disappeared in Indochina.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Thank you.

Chairman KERRY. I want to thank you very much, both for the work you do as well as for taking the time to come in and share these observations with us, which are very helpful. We will leave the record open, as I discussed earlier. And we also will not have a closed session on the portion that we had today. I think the committee has—and I think Senator Smith agrees, done a significant amount of closed session on that portion of it.

Tomorrow we will be in closed session to discuss one particular area of imagery. So we stand adjourned until tomorrow at that time. Thank you, very much.

[Whereupon, at 1:25 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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