



E. R. ZUMWALT, JR.
ADMIRAL, U. S. NAVY (RET.)

13 December 1985

Ambassador Richard Schifter
Assistant Secretary of State for
Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs
U.S. Department of State
Room 7802
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Dick:

For your information, I attach a copy of a personal letter from Rick Armitage. I understand the priority that has to be given to the POW/MIA issue but hope that through your good offices we can keep the pressures on for the good Vietnamese.

All best wishes.

Sincerely,

E. R. Zumwalt, Jr.

1500 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, Virginia 22209
703/841-8960

Attachment



INTERNATIONAL
SECURITY AFFAIRS

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

DEC 12 1985

In reply refer to:
I-18074/85

10 DEC 1985

Admiral (Retired) E. R. Zumwalt, Jr.
1500 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, VA 22209

Dear Admiral Zumwalt:

Thank you for your letter of December 5, 1985, regarding former Vietnamese allies in retraining camps.

U.S. Government officials have raised the subject of freedom for retraining camp prisoners with the Vietnamese on numerous occasions. The Vietnamese responses have given us no reason to be optimistic, by any measure. Still, the U.S. Government will continue to press for their release.

Our policy has been to avoid linkage of the POW/MIA issue with any other issue. After four years of our pursuing a 10-part, integrated strategy (which includes this linkage aspect), the Vietnamese finally have recognized and accepted that the POW/MIA question is a separate issue which can be resolved despite other differences between us. At this juncture, where we appear to be on the threshold of significant progress on resolving the POW/MIA issue, we must adhere to our strategy, which is working. Raising the political prisoner question during POW/MIA discussions risks jeopardizing our position.

While I certainly appreciate your perspective, I feel duty-bound to focus our efforts to achieve resolution of the POW/MIA issue, which President Reagan has made a matter of the highest national priority. The President has given us an objective and we must concentrate our energies to achieve that goal. However, I can assure you that at other times and other fora, we will continue to seek the release of political prisoners in Vietnam.

Sincerely,

Richard L. Armitage
Assistant Secretary of Defense
(International Security Affairs)

Admiral E. R. Zumwalt, Jr.

*We shall, of course,
continue to press the
VN's on release
of re-education victims
thru our dialogue - but
POW/MIA is the main
area of focus - 12th*