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NATIONAL LEAGUE OF FAMILIES
OF AMERICAN PRISONERS AND MISSING IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

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POW/MIA UPDATE

As of April 1973, at the end of formal U.S. military involvement in Southeast Asia, some 1,400 American servicemen remained officially listed as prisoners of war (POW) or missing in action (MIA), with another 1,100 listed as killed in action, body not recovered (KIA/BNR). Since that time, due primarily to the determination of the families and a nucleus of concerned citizens and dedicated Congressmen, the Vietnamese have been persuaded to provide information on about 75 of these 2,500 men; however, they have steadfastly denied holding any additional American prisoners and have refused to provide an accounting for those whose fate remains unknown.

Evidence of Live Americans

The influx of Indochinese refugees into this country over the past few years has brought convincing new evidence that the Vietnamese continue to hold American servicemen in captivity. The Defense Intelligence Agency is currently investigating over 900 such reports, some 450 of which pertain to sightings of men held captive. Specifically, one such substantiated report indicates three men were sighted in Hanoi as late as 1979.

While the government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam claims to be searching for information on the missing, the sincerity of their efforts is dubious since recent substantiated intelligence information indicates they are secretly holding the remains of some 400 missing Americans in a Hanoi facility once used as a POW camp.

Current Efforts

Although the military services have presumed dead all but a few of those originally listed as POW or MIA, U.S. government officials are taking a new look at the issue and have increased efforts to corroborate, analyze and verify the sighting reports.

As a result, U.S. government policies and attitudes are changing. Where previous official statements claimed a lack of credible evidence that men were still alive, new government policy reflects the increasing reports indicating that some Americans are still in captivity. Additionally, an interagency working group has been formed to coordinate a cohesive national POW/MIA policy. The group is comprised of representatives from responsible agencies within the State and Defense Departments, the National Security Council, the National League of Families and the Congressional POW/MIA Task Force. However, presidential priority is what has been lacking during several years of effort to obtain the accounting.

The Current Status on the Prisoner of War/ Missing in Action
(PW/MIA) Issue

1. Many Americans are unaware that nearly 2,500 servicemen are still unaccounted as a result of the Vietnam war. There were 2,553 military and 41 civilian Americans unaccounted for at "Homecoming" in 1973. The military included 96 prisoners of war (POW's), 1,178 killed in action - body not recovered, and 1,279 missing in action (MIA). The civilians included 25 missing and 16 presumed dead. Since then, 74 remains have been returned and most individual cases of those unaccounted for have been administratively reviewed. Cases reviewed have invariably resulted in a presumptive finding of death, based on data accumulated in the file and the additional criteria of a lapse of time without information to indicate the individual is still living. Therefore, as of Nov 1980, only 14 military personnel, of those unaccounted for, have not been presumed dead. These 14 cases are broken down to 1-POW (USAF) and 13 MIA (11-USAF, 1-USN, and 1-USMC).

2. The fact that only 14 cases remain active does not minimize the need to achieve the fullest possible accounting for the approximately 2,500 men whose fate remains in question. The debt owed to each serviceman that is unaccounted for, as well as to the individual's family is well known. Although this obligation can never be fully satisfied, the USG can and should make every effort to achieve as extensive an accounting as possible. It should be emphasized that this is not just a humane gesture, but a US Government (USG) responsibility due every serviceman, past, present, and future.

3. Since the end of the Vietnam war, there has been an ebb and flow of government and public interest in accounting for Americans missing as a result of the war. The DOD PW Policy Committee, which handled the PW/MIA issue prior to the end of US involvement, became inactive shortly after the US withdrew from Vietnam. However, in January 1980, an interagency group (IAG), which is comprised of representatives of the State Department, Office of the Secretary of Defense/International Security Affairs, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), National Security Council, Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs/House Foreign Affairs Committee and the National League of POW/MIA Families, was established and has since been active. The main purpose of this group is to insure that priority is given to the issue and that US efforts are coordinated as we continue to press for resolution of the PW/MIA issue. The IAG is continuing the work started by the JCS to develop an explicit USG policy on the PW/MIA issue.

4. Although the Vietnamese claim to have released all POW's and to have been fully cooperative with the US Government, the facts deny this claim. The SRV has returned 72 remains and has allowed Laos to return four remains, two of which were identified as not being American. However, the Vietnamese have refused to account for Americans who were known POW's. In some cases, they have even acknowledged holding specific individuals at one time or another. These circumstances clearly belie their present claim to have fully cooperated in resolving the status of these individuals.

5. Of greatest concern are the recurring reports of the sightings of caucasians currently held captive in Indochina. As more Indochinese refugees are interviewed, the frequency of live sighting reports has also increased significantly. We now have over 280 firsthand reports of live sightings under investigation. Additionally, over 170 second hand or "hearsay" reports are being investigated. Due to the number of reports of live sightings, the following USG public affairs response to queries about unaccounted Americans has been formulated: "There is an increasing number of reports that Americans may be held against their will in Indochina, but the U.S. Government has thus far been unable to substantiate this information and priority effort will continue to be assigned to investigating these reports." The increasing possibility that Americans are still incarcerated in Indochina, seven years after the war has ended, mandates immediate, high-level, US government attention. One should be aware of the intelligence on this subject before forming an opinion.

6. One source testified that the SRV collected skeletal remains of Americans for many years and possessed, as late as early 1979, over 400 individual remains. Portions of this testimony have been independently verified by DIA and the witness has successfully passed polygraph tests. After first denying access to the building where the remains were reportedly stored, the Vietnamese, after several months, allowed reporters to visit the complex. As expected, no remains were found; however, DIA still considers this source valid.

7. Logically, successful resolution of the PW/MIA issue requires a number of specific actions: release of any live Americans presently being held; return of previously collected remains of US personnel; search, recovery, and return of any additional US remains; and a cooperative effort by the USG and Indochinese Governments in those cases where no remains exist or can be found. Additionally, fullest possible accounting requires priority attention to the issue and coordination of the efforts of all responsible US government agencies, as well as active participation and cooperation of all concerned nations.

8. Although both the USG and the Vietnamese Government have tacitly agreed that the PW/MIA issue is humanitarian in nature and should be resolved regardless of political differences, the Vietnamese continue to link the PW/MIA issue to other considerations. History shows that the Vietnamese, in dealing with France on the return and accounting for missing French personnel, responded only when it was beneficial to their self interests. Humanitarian ideals have had little significance; therefore, a new USG negotiation strategy is required. Although numerous demarches have been made to the Indochinese nations to this date, they have "stonewalled." The standard SRV response cites their inability to cooperate in search or accounting activities because their manpower is being fully utilized to defend against the threat of attack from the People's Republic of China (PRC). Recently, the Vietnamese have also stated that their people are reluctant to assist because of hostility over the "collusion" between the United States and the PRC. Although the Joint Casualty Resolution Center liaison team's recent trip to Hanoi (1 - 4 Oct 1980) had the potential for progress on the PW/MIA issue, once again, nothing of significance resulted.

9. The IAG is addressing the issues and any resulting proposed actions by the responsible US government executive agencies, the Congress, and the PW/MIA families. In respect to Congressional action, the Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs, House Foreign Affairs Committee, under Chairman Wolff is considering a hearing on the issue in December 1980. It is important not to lose the momentum generated during 1980, and to maintain unrelenting pressure on the Indochinese nations, especially the SRV, with respect to resolving the PW/MIA issue.

No Stars & Stripes - Nov 13
200,000 1980

Demand POW/ MIA Accounting

Some 200,000 signatures on petitions demanding an accounting by Hanoi of those missing in action were delivered to the U.S. mission to the United Nations October 27 by Congressman Lester Wolff (D-NY) while he was a Member of the Congress.

American Legion National Commander Michael J. Koguteck joined Wolff and Representatives of other veterans and service organizations that helped collect the signatures in a press conference following the turnover ceremony.

Wolff is Chairman of the House of Foreign Affairs Committee's Subcommittee on Asia and Pacific Affairs, whose task force on POW/MIA solicited the signatures "to demonstrate to the Vietnamese that the American people have not forgotten our men." ★

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V		P	DATE	DATE	PP	
M. VS ANDERSON THOMAS EDWARD	COL	S	621006 SPENARD	621006	03	BNR
N VN KOSLOSKY HOWARD MARK	AN	9	691002 ANCHORAGE	691002	NY	BNR
F VN RICHARDSON FLOYD WHITLEY COL	F	670303	ANCHORAGE	670106	NZ	BNR

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Statement of

Lieutenant General Eugene F. Tighe, Jr., USAF

Director

Defense Intelligence Agency

on

Prisoners of War and Missing in Action

Before the

Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs

As Well As The

Foreign Affairs Task Force on Prisoners and Missing in Action

House Committee on Foreign Affairs

December 2, 1980

Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, I appreciate the opportunity to come before you today to testify on this most important issue. This will make my fourth appearance before this Subcommittee since June of last year. During this period, my staff has continued to keep this Subcommittee current on DIA's ongoing PW/MIA intelligence efforts through a series of informal briefings. I intend to discuss with you the current status of DIA's PW/MIA effort and the course we will pursue in the future.

There are still approximately 2,500 Americans unaccounted-for in Southeast Asia. At the completion of Operation Homecoming in 1973, these individuals were classified as Prisoners of War, Missing in Action, and Killed in Action (body not recovered). The status of most of these 2,500 Americans has since been changed by the Military Services to that of presumed dead. Notwithstanding, there is no distinction between these terms as far as DIA is concerned. We continue to seek an accounting for these 2,500 Americans regardless of the fact that an individual is listed as presumed dead or missing in action. We must pursue, with greatest vigor, our investigations of all reports from or of that area - whether they speak of the missing or the dead. We have no higher priority.

Since 1975, DIA has received approximately 900 reports from Indochinese refugees concerning alleged sightings of Americans, crash locations, grave sites and the handling and disposition of American remains. Of these reports, 290 have been first-hand and approximately 180 have been hearsay live sighting reports. The remaining reports concern crash site and grave site information. Of the about 900 reports from Indochinese refugees, approximately 125 have been

received since my last testimony before this Subcommittee in June, all of which have had follow-up action accomplished on them. These 900 refugee reports are an indication that there is information remaining to be obtained which may assist in determining the fate of those individuals still unaccounted-for.

I continue to emphasize to my people strong command attention to DIA's PW/MIA intelligence research and analysis effort and a close personal watch on all PW/MIA events is provided me, highlighted by reporting to me every single day on our progress in pursuit of reports on the missing. I have insured that DIA's capability to investigate reports of live sightings and crash and grave sites continues at a high level by approving the allocation of an additional three permanent billets to DIA's PW/MIA Branch. I recently emphasized in a personal message to all senior U.S. military intelligence officials worldwide, my keen interest and concern for priority collection and analysis of PW/MIA information. DIA has regularly participated in, and provided intelligence briefings at the four meetings of the Interagency Advisory Group which have been held since my testimony before this Subcommittee in June. As you are aware, the Interagency Group is comprised of representatives of the State Department, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, Joint Chiefs of Staff, DIA, National Security Council, National League of Families and staff representatives from this Subcommittee. The main purpose of the group is to insure that priority is given to the PW/MIA issue and that U.S. efforts are coordinated as we continue to press for resolution of the issue. We provide the intelligence upon which decision-makers develop U.S. government policy.

We continue to have an excellent working relationship with the

other U.S. intelligence agencies and the military intelligence organization through near daily liaison and frequent meetings on this very important subject. When required, we've had marvelous cooperation from military personnel of other intelligence services and agencies in assisting in the interview of refugees with knowledge of use to the PW/MIA question. The Defense Attaches in Southeast Asia have received outstanding support from their host governments regarding the search for PW/MIA information. Cooperation from the Joint Casualty Resolution Center has been exceptionally good. The three personnel assigned to the Joint Casualty Resolution Center in Bangkok provide impressive and noteworthy responses to DIA's requests for interviews and follow-up actions. During the past year, these people have interviewed some 400 refugees and accomplished follow-up interviews on approximately 250 reports. They perform a difficult task in an exemplary manner.

Although travel to the various refugee camps in Southeast Asia is time-consuming, Joint Casualty Resolution Center personnel regularly meet the short suspenses we impose.

In addition to the follow-up action accomplished by Joint Casualty Resolution Center personnel, DIA's quick reaction team continues to travel far and wide to see possibly knowledgeable sources and has recently interviewed six Vietnamese refugees in Europe. As you know this DIA team was established for immediate deployment worldwide to debrief potential sources of PW/MIA information. Since just last June, the DIA team members have completed interviews with 25 refugees throughout the continental United States. Nineteen more interviews are in process. In this program, DIA has interviewed 15 Indochinese refugees in four European countries and 105 refugees in the United States in the past year. DIA has had no budgetary constraints imposed on travel monies

travel allowances are austere for other purposes.

There are currently a number of reports on refugee sightings of live PWs that we have extensively investigated and others for which follow-up action has been initiated. However, of all of the live sighting reports DIA has evaluated, there are none which can be substantiated relative to Americans being detained against their will in Southeast Asia.

DIA will continue to pursue all information which indicates the location of Americans, regardless of status, in Southeast Asia. In order to assure highest motivation of all DIA personnel involved in this investigative process my approach will always posit that one or more Americans are detained there against their will. In my judgment, no other approach will allow an objective evaluation of evidence or create an environment in which I can be sure that personnel working on this problem are doing everything they can to resolve the issue of unaccounted-for Americans in Southeast Asia.

The Southeast Asian Communist Governments continue to be intransigent on the PW/MIA issue. We know that the Governments in Indochina possess some information about our unaccounted-for people and we intend to continue collecting and analyzing all available information until as full an accounting as possible has been made. In spite of the intransigence of these countries, it is my intent, and I believe my duty, to see to it that DIA pursues each and every report which can help resolve this important issue. DIA continues to put our top emphasis on investigation of information relating to U.S. personnel who might still be held prisoner in Southeast Asia. I have insured that all of the intelligence collection disciplines are brought to bear on the matter.

I do my best to keep the very able Executive Director of the National League of Families informed of all our efforts in pursuing reports of PW/MIA information and the results of our interviews. Additionally, any report that DIA correlates to an individual that is unaccounted-for is provided to that individual's parent service for their use with that individual's next-of-kin.

In summary Mr. Chairman, it has been a pleasure to testify again before this Subcommittee on this most important subject. Let me assure you of DIA's resolve as unwavering. We will continue to provide a dedicated and professional effort directed toward the resolution of this issue. We will aggressively pursue every lead and leave no stone unturned in our quest to determine the fate of the U.S. personnel unaccounted-for in Southeast Asia. I consider as I know you do - that to do any less would be both unconscionable and unforgivable.

My staff and I will continue to cooperate closely with your subcommittee task force.

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