

S E C R E T--

THIS IS AN INFORMATION REPORT, NOT FINALLY EVALUATED INTELLIGENCE (b)(1)
(b)(3)

SUBJECT: Sightings of Six Alleged U.S. Prisoners-of-War in a Detention Camp Near Thao La Hamlet in Northern Laos

TEXT: 1. In late April 1982, a six-man Vietnamese forest survey team saw a total of six alleged U.S. prisoners-of-war (POW's) at a detention camp in a small valley of Thao La Hamlet, Houa Phan Province, in northern Laos (grid coordinates 20 degrees north latitude, 104 degrees east meridian). On 26 April accompanied by an unidentified Lao guide, saw four tall Caucasians who were said to be U.S. POW's being escorted by two small Asian guards from the prisoners' house of detention to the camp office. On 27 April the same survey team saw two blacks who were also said to be U.S. POW's carrying bamboo baskets on their back being escorted up a hill by a guard to carry out their labor duties. The forest survey team made the observations from a steep hill at the edge of the Thao La Valley where the detention camp was located. [redacted] Comment: The Lao guide told the [redacted] the men they had seen were U.S. POW's. He said the camp held about 50 such POW's who had recently been transferred to the camp from an unknown location.) (Headquarters Comment: Presumably the guards were Lao People's Democratic Republic (LPDR) personnel.)

2. The camp was located across the valley to the southeast of Thao La Hamlet. The house of detention was a long, thatched house with a small front yard. It stood between two smaller houses with walls made of timber, apparently the camp office and a guards' quarters. The camp was surrounded by a trench and a fence of closely posted, pointed wood poles. Thao La Hamlet had about 50 small houses located next to a creek.

3. [redacted] left the SRV from Dong Ha Town, Binh Tri Thien Province, early on 12 April 1982 in military trucks. They picked up the Lao guide at Lao Bao on the SRV-LPDR border and continued to Sepon and the town of Xieng Khouang, arriving about 1400 hours on the same day. The [redacted] moved along National Route 2-A (sic), or the old Ho Chi Minh Trail, northward to the Luang Prabang Plateau, at about the same parallel as Nam Dinh Town in northern SRV. They then moved northeastward for two more days along the T-42 road built by the Pathet Lao circa 1974. [redacted] reached the That Luang River at a point about six kilometers south of the location of the SRV 320th Division. After crossing the river, [redacted] moved northward following the river bank for two days and arrived at a grove of young "Samou" trees, each about three meters high; between them were small bare hills of gypsum. This area was about 60 kilometers southwest of Dien Bien Phu Town in the SRV. After walking about two kilometers through the Samou trees, [redacted] walked one more kilometer through a forest of big trees, reaching a steep hill. Beyond this hill was the Thao La Valley.

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4.

a. This information was obtained from the debriefing of

b. [redacted] received the information in this report from [redacted], who was part of the [redacted] which saw the prisoners. [redacted] told [redacted] about the incident so that he could pass the information to the U.S. Government once [redacted] fled the SRV.

c. Subsequent to providing the above information.

WARNING: ~~SECRET~~

DECL OADR DRV [redacted] BY RECORDED REPORTING OFFICER. ALL PORTIONS CARRY CLASSIFICATION AND CONTROLS OF OVERALL DOCUMENT.

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