

DIRECTORATE OF
OPERATIONS

SECRET

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REPORT CLASS

COUNTRY USSR

DATE DISTR. 12 March 1982

SUBJECT Alleged Soviet Incarceration of U.S. Vietnam Prisoners of War (DOI: 1970) REFERENCES

SOURCE

SUMMARY: According to [redacted] specially selected U.S. prisoners of war were being received into the Soviet Union circa 1970 for long term or lifetime incarceration and "ideological retraining." He implied the number involved to be about 2,000. The goal of the program was indefinite, but involved intensive psychological investigation of the prisoners and retraining to make them available as required to serve the needs of the Soviet Union. [redacted]

END SUMMARY.

1. [redacted] Comment: This report should be read with caution. CIA records contain no confirmation of the alleged intelligence affiliation of the [redacted] despite the [redacted] assertion that [redacted] Several other persons named in the text likewise cannot be identified. We have never before encountered even vague rumors among Soviet dissidents or other informants that any U.S. POW's from Vietnam are incarcerated in [redacted]

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the USSR, much less that 2,000 such individuals are leading "reasonably normal lives" in the same region where numerous Soviet political prisoners have resided in exile. In short, while the [redacted]

[redacted] we strongly believe that this report merits little if any credence from analysts. However, in light of continuing high interest in the question of U.S. personnel still listed as missing in action in Southeast Asia, this report is being disseminated with appropriate caveats to concerned members of the U.S. Intelligence Community.)

2. [redacted] circa 1970, [redacted] stated that many specially selected U.S. prisoners of war were being received from North Vietnam for long term or lifetime custody and "ideological re-training" in the Soviet Union. [redacted] Comment: [redacted] did not state specifically the number of prisoners involved. The term he used was "v poryadke neskol'kikh tysyach v nas tozhe yest'" which translates as "on the order of several thousand," implying the number to be about 2,000). The prisoners were destined for confinement at a facility near Perm. [redacted] learned of the program from an unnamed high level [redacted] understood that Soviets rather than North Vietnamese were involved in the initial selection process and that participants were to be continually assessed for suitability. He implied that individuals determined to be unsuitable would be eliminated and replaced with other candidates. (Comment: [redacted]

3. [redacted] the goals of the U.S. prisoner program were indefinite but involved intensive psychological studies of the individuals and utilization of them as required to serve the needs of the Soviet Union. [redacted] understood that the detention facility was not a standard prison, but rather one in which inmates could lead reasonably normal lives. During the conversation [redacted] recalled that precedents existed for such a program in the Soviet Union and cited similar previous efforts with Spanish, Japanese, and Chinese nationals. He stated that in past programs, participants were encouraged to marry Soviet women.

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4. (Comment: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

5. [REDACTED] volunteered the information regarding the Vietnam prisoners [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the subject of prison camps arose, in particular those which furnished labor for Siberian economic development. The conversation then shifted to Vietnam and the apparent increase in strength of South Vietnam at the time and the apparent instability in the North. [REDACTED] agreed, citing the massive U.S. commitment to the South, but added that the Soviets were also making gains. He then described the program involving U.S. prisoners.

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