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FIR-317/09226-83

REPORT CLASS C O N F I D E N T I A L - [REDACTED]

COUNTRY: LAOS/VIETNAM

SUBJ: OBSERVATION OF SIX ALLEGED U.S. PRISONERS-OF-WAR  
IN A DETENTION CAMP NEAR THAO LA HAMLET IN  
NORTHERN LAOS

(b)(1)

(b)(3)

DOI: 26-27 APRIL 1982

SOURCE: [REDACTED]

TEXT: 1. IN LATE APRIL 1982, [REDACTED] SAW SIX ALLEGED U.S. PRISONERS-OF-WAR (POW'S) AT A DETENTION CAMP IN A SMALL VALLEY OF THAO LA HAMLET IN NORTHERN LAOS (GRID COORDINATES 20 DEGREES NORTH LATITUDE, 104 DEGREES EAST MERIDIAN). ON 26 APRIL [REDACTED] ACCOMPANIED BY AN UNIDENTIFIED LAO GUIDE, SAW FOUR TALL CAUCASIANS SAID TO BE U.S. POW'S 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 SAID TO BE U.S. POW'S CARRYING BAMBOO BASKETS ON THEIR BACK ESCORTED UP A HILL BY ONE GUARD TO CARRY OUT THEIR LABOR DUTIES.

[REDACTED] MADE THE OBSERVATIONS FROM A STEEP HILL AT THE EDGE OF THE THAO LA VALLEY WHERE THE DETENTION CAMP WAS LOCATED. [REDACTED] COMMENT: THE UNIDENTIFIED LAO GUIDE WHO TOLD SOURCE THE MEN THEY OBSERVED WERE U.S. POW'S SAID THE CAMP HELD ABOUT 50 U.S. POW'S WHO WERE TRANSFERRED TO THE CAMP FROM AN UNKNOWN LOCATION NOT LONG BEFORE [REDACTED] SOURCE MADE THE OBSERVATION.)

2. THE CAMP WAS SOUTHEAST AND ACROSS THE VALLEY FROM THAO LA HAMLET. THE HOUSE OF DETENTION WAS A LONG THATCHED HOUSE WITH A SMALL FRONT YARD. IT STOOD BETWEEN

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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 40 SMALL HOUSES NEXT TO A CREEK.

3. LEFT THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM (SRV) FROM DONG HA TOWN EARLY ON 12 APRIL 1982 ON MILITARY TRUCKS. THEY PICKED UP THE LAO GUIDE AT THE LAO BAD BORDER TOWN AND CONTINUED TO TCHEPNE AND XIENG KHOUANG TOWN, ARRIVING ABOUT 1400 HOURS ON THE SAME DAY. MOVED ALONG NATIONAL ROUTE 2-A, OR THE OLD HO CHI MINH TRAIL, NORTHWARD TO THE LUANG PRABANG PLATEAUS, AT ABOUT THE SAME PARALLEL AS THAN NAM DINH TOWN IN NORTHERN SRV. THEY THEN MOVED NORTHEASTWARD ALONG THE T-42 ROAD BUILT BY THE PATHET LAO AROUND 1974 FOR TWO MORE DAYS. REACHED THE THAO LUANG RIVER AT A POINT ABOUT SIX KILOMETERS SOUTH OF THE LOCATION OF THE SRV 320TH DIVISION. AFTER CROSSING THE RIVER, 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 IS ABOUT 60 KILOMETERS SOUTHWEST OF DIEN BIEN PHU TOWN IN THE SRV. AFTER WALKING ABOUT TWO KILOMETERS THROUGH THE SAMOU TREES, WALKED ONE MORE KILOMETER THROUGH A FOREST OF BIG TREES AND REACHED A STEEP HILL. BEYOND THIS HILL IS THE THAO LA VALLEY.

DISSEM: FIELD: NONE.

WARNING: REPORT CLASS ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ - [REDACTED]

DECL: GADR BY RECORDED REPORTING OFFICER. ALL PORTIONS CARRY CLASSIFICATION AND CONTROLS OF OVERALL DOCUMENT.

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