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Intelligence Information Cable

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FURTHER DISSEMINATION AND USE OF THIS INFORMATION SUBJECT TO CONTROLS STATED AT BEGINNING AND END OF REPORT.



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COUNTRY: VIETNAM

SUBJECT: REEDUCATION OF FORMER ARMY OF REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

OFFICERS AT KATUM, HOC MON AND GIA TRUNG CAMPS

(OOI: MID-1975 - 14 JULY 1980)

SOURCE:

[Redacted Source Information]

SUMMARY: IN MID-1975 APPROXIMATELY 6,000 ARVN OFFICERS WERE SENT TO KATUM, NEAR THE KAMPUCHEAN/VIETNAMESE BORDER. IN EARLY 1977 THE CAMP WAS ABANDONED AND THE INMATES TRANSFERRED TO VARIOUS OTHER CAMPS AWAY FROM THE BORDER. ONE SUCH CAMP WAS HOC MON, WHICH HELD ABOUT 4,000 INMATES. IN JANUARY 1979 THE HOC MON FACILITIES WERE TURNED OVER TO THE PAVN AND THE INMATES AGAIN TRANSFERRED, MANY GOING TO THE GIA TRUNG CAMP. IN ALL THREE CAMPS CONDITIONS WERE HARSH AND EMPHASIS WAS PLACED ON MANUAL LABOR. END SUMMARY.

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1. IN MID-1975, APPROXIMATELY 6,000 ARMY OF REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM (ARVN) OFFICERS FROM THE RANK OF 2ND LIEUTENANT TO CAPTAIN (NAVY-ENSIGN TO LIEUTENANT) WERE SENT TO KATUM VILLAGE, NORTH OF TAY NINH CITY NEAR THE KAMPUCHEAN/VIETNAMESE BORDER, FOR REEDUCATION. CONDITIONS IN THE CAMP WERE HARSH AND REEDUCATION CONSISTED MAINLY OF LONG HOURS OF MANUAL LABOR ON BARELY SUSTAINANCE RATIONS. MINOR EMPHASIS WAS PLACED ON POLITICAL REINDOCTRINATION. MANY OF THE INMATES SUFFERED DISEASES ASSOCIATED WITH VITAMIN DEFICIENCIES AND MANY DEATHS RESULTED.

2. IN EARLY 1977 AS RELATIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF KAMPUCHEA DETERIORATED AND ARMED INCIDENTS ALONG THE BORDER ESCALATED, THE CAMP AT KATUM WAS ABANDONED AND THE INMATES TRANSFERRED TO VARIOUS OTHER CAMPS AWAY FROM THE BORDER AREA. ONE SUCH CAMP WAS LOCATED AT HOC MON. APART FROM A SLIGHT IMPROVEMENT IN THEIR LIVING ACCOMMODATION, THE INMATES NOW LIVED IN THE FORMER BARRACKS OF AN ARVN ENGINEER UNIT, HEAVY MANUAL LABOR COMBINED WITH INSUFFICIENT RATIONS CONTINUED TO CAUSE SICKNESS AND DEATH AMONG THE OFFICERS. THE NUMBER OF INMATES AT HOC MON WAS ABOUT 4,000.

3. IN JANUARY 1979, THE BASE FACILITIES AT HOC MON WERE HANDED BACK TO THE PEOPLE'S ARMY OF VIETNAM (PAVN). CONTINUED ESCALATION OF CROSS BORDER INCIDENTS WITH DEMOCRATIC KAMPUCHEA (DK) FORCES HAD FORCED THE PAVN TO INCREASE ITS MANPOWER AND THE BASE WAS NEEDED FOR THE MILITARY EXPANSION. ONCE AGAIN THE INMATES WERE TRANSFERRED TO OTHER CAMPS.

4. MANY OF THE HOC MON INMATES WERE TRANSFERRED TO THE GIA TRUNG CAMP.

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GIA LAI-CONG TUM PROVINCE:

UNLIKE PREVIOUS CAMPS, GIA TRUNG HELD SEVERAL CATEGORIES OF PRISONERS. THERE WERE ARVN OFFICERS FROM 2ND LIEUTENANT TO CAPTAIN UNDERGOING RE EDUCATION, LOW LEVEL CIVIL SERVANTS ALSO UNDERGOING REEDUCATION, CRIMINALS IMPRISONED FOR CIVIL CRIMES AND PROSTITUTES. THERE WERE APPROXIMATELY 7,000 INMATES OF WHOM ABOUT 1,500 WERE FORMER OFFICERS. THE INMATES WERE IN SEPARATE ZONES ACCORDING TO THEIR CATEGORY. GIA TRUNG WAS UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE PUBLIC SECURITY SERVICE (PSS).

AFTER LATE 1978, CONTROL OF REEDUCATION CAMPS GRADUALLY BECAME A PSS RESPONSIBILITY AS THE PRESURE ON THE PAVN INCREASED ALONG THE KAMPUCHEAN BORDER. THE SITUATION WAS FURTHER EXACERBATED IN EARLY 1979 AS THE SITUATION ALONG THE SINO/VIETNAMESE BORDER WORSENERD.

5. THE GIA TRUNG CAMP WAS LOCATED ABOUT 40 KILOMETERS FROM PLEIKU (PLAY CO), BETWEEN PLEIKU AND CONG TUM (KONTUM). IT WAS SITED IN VIRGIN LAND AND AS NEW INMATES ARRIVED LAND HAD TO BE CLEARED AND ACCOMMODATIONS BUILT FOR THEM. ACCESS TO THE CAMP WAS POSSIBLE BY VEHICULAR TRAFFIC. THERE WAS NO HOSPITAL OR CLINIC IN THE CAMP BUT THERE WAS A MEDICAL ASSISTANT FOR THE TREATMENT OF MINOR INJURIES AND AILMENTS. LACK OF MEDICINES AND DRUGS PRECLUDED ANY MEASURE OF POSITIVE MEDICAL TREATMENT. SERIOUS INJURIES AND AILMENTS WERE TREATED AT PLEIKU. THE CAMP HAD NO ELECTRICITY.

6. MAJOR EMPHASIS AT GIA TRUNG WAS PLACED ON MANUAL LABOR. THE FORMER OFFICERS AND CIVIL SERVANTS WERE COMBINED FOR WORK DETAILS AND WERE REFERRED TO AS THE AGRICULTURAL BLOC (KHOI NONG NGHIEP). THE

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AGRICULTURAL BLOC WAS FURTHER SUB-DIVIDED INTO AGRICULTURAL UNITS (DOI NONG NGHIEP) OF APPROXIMATELY 50 MEN. DAILY ROUTINE FOR THE CAMP STARTED WITH REVEILLE AT 0430 HOURS. A HALF-HOUR WAS ALLOWED FOR MORNING ABLUTIONS AND AT 0500 HOURS THE WORK DETAILS SET OUT FOR THEIR ALLOTTED TASKS. DETAILS WORKING OUTSIDE THE CAMP WERE ACCOMPANIED BY THREE ARMED PSS PERSONNEL. THE MEN WOULD WORK UNTIL 1130 HOURS WHEN THEY WOULD BREAK FOR 30 MINUTES FOR LUNCH. WORK WOULD BEGIN AGAIN AT 1200 HOURS AND STOP AT 1800 HOURS. THE EVENING MEAL BREAK (UNTIL 2000 HOURS) WAS FOLLOWED BY TWO HOURS OF POLITICAL STUDY CONSISTING OF LECTURES ON POLITICAL SUBJECTS, AGRICULTURAL TOPICS, PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE DIRECTIVES AND RESOLUTIONS, ETC., NORMALLY FOLLOWED BY DISCUSSION PERIODS. LIGHTS OUT WAS AT 2200 HOURS.

7. EACH INMATE WAS ALLOCATED NINE KILOGRAMS OF FOOD-STUFFS PER MONTH WHICH USUALLY WORKED OUT AT 300 GRAMS PER DAY (TWO 150 GRAM MEALS). THE FOOD CONSISTED OF MANIOC, A SMALL AMOUNT OF GREEN VEGETABLE AND UNLIMITED AMOUNTS OF SALT. EACH INMATE RECEIVED ABOUT ONE LITER OF DRINKING WATER PER DAY. THE ONLY VARIATION TO THE DIET WOULD OCCUR ABOUT EVERY THREE MONTHS IF RELATIVES WERE PERMITTED TO VISIT. UPON REQUEST, RELATIVES WERE ALLOWED TO VISIT AN INMATE A MAXIMUM OF ONCE EVERY THREE MONTHS FOR FIFTEEN MINUTES. DURING THESE VISITS THE INMATE COULD RECEIVE A SMALL AMOUNT OF MEDICINES, CIGARETTES, INSTANT NOODLES AND PRE-COOKED MEAT OR FISH. HOWEVER, NO RICE WAS ALLOWED TO BE HANDED OVER. VISITORS WERE RECEIVED IN A SMALL BUILDING UNDER THE SURVEILLANCE OF THE PSS ABOUT 500 METERS FROM THE MAIN CAMP

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OF THE SPARSE DIET, BERI-BERI WAS RAMPANT IN THE CAMP. OTHER COMMON AILMENTS WERE MALARIA, TUBERCULOSIS AND DYSENTERY. DEATHS AT GIA TRUNG FLUCTUATED FROM MONTH TO MONTH BUT USUALLY BETWEEN TWO AND FIVE PEOPLE DIED EACH MONTH. MOST COMMON CAUSES WERE TUBERCULOSIS AND THE EFFECTS OF SEVERE DYSENTERY.

8. THE MAIN CROPS GROWN AT GIA TRUNG WERE RICE, MANIOC, SWEET POTATOES, CORN AND VEGETABLES. ALL CLEARING OF FOREST AND CULTIVATION WAS DONE BY HAND. THERE WAS NO MACHINERY AVAILABLE AT THE CAMP, THE ONLY IMPLEMENTS BEING AXES AND HOES. WHEN THE CROPS WERE HARVESTED THE PSS WOULD SELL THE PRODUCE TO THE LOCAL POPULACE AND POCKET THE PROCEEDS.

9. ON RELEASE, INMATES WERE GIVEN DISCHARGE PAPERS (GIẤY XUẤT TRAI) WHICH AUTHORIZED THEM TO RETURN TO THEIR HOMES FOR A MAXIMUM OF ONE YEAR AFTER WHICH THEY WERE EXPECTED TO VOLUNTARILY MOVE TO A NEW ECONOMIC ZONE WHILE AT HOME THEY WERE REQUIRED TO KEEP THE LOCAL PSS INFORMED OF THEIR ACTIVITIES AND WHEREABOUTS AT ALL TIMES.

10. [REDACTED] COMMENT: AT THE TIME OF [REDACTED] RELEASE IN JULY 1980, THERE WERE STILL ABOUT 6,000 INMATES AT GIA TRUNG. [REDACTED] COULD NOT SPEAK FOR THE CRIMINAL/PROSTITUTE CATEGORIES BECAUSE THEY WERE SENTENCED UNDER THE CIVIL CRIMINAL CODE, BUT THE FORMER OFFICERS AND CIVIL SERVANTS WERE GIVEN NO INDICATION OF THE LENGTH OF THEIR TERM OF REEDUCATION. RANK DOES NOT APPEAR TO HAVE HAD ANY BEARING ON DETERMINING DATE OF RELEASE BUT RATHER WHETHER A PERSON APPEARED RECEPTIVE OR NOT TO THE COMMUNIST WAY OF THINKING. [REDACTED] LEARNED OF HIS RELEASE AT 0430 HOURS ON THE DAY OF HIS RELEASE WHEN HE HEARD HIS NAME CALLED OVER THE

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