

DOMESTIC COLLECTION DIVISION Foreign Intelligence Information Report



DIRECTORATE OF OPERATIONS

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REPORT CLASS. ~~C O N F I D E N T I A L~~ []

REPORT NO. []

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 [] 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. []

END SUMMARY.

1. (Headquarters Comment: This report should be read with caution. CIA records contain no confirmation of the alleged intelligence affiliation of [] cited below, despite [] assertion that [] held a leading position in the KGB. 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 []

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REMARKS

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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 [REDACTED] may be reporting his recollection of an actual conversation, 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 In a private conversation which was held circa 1970, KGB [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] who learned of the program from an unnamed high level KGB colleague, 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. [REDACTED] Comment: [REDACTED] made his comment while serving as a political ideologist and personnel officer at the [REDACTED] of the State Committee for Science and Technology in Moscow. He had previously served as Chief of the KGB's [REDACTED] and in that capacity would have very likely made contacts among KGB officials subsequently responsible for organizing any such prisoner program.)

3. According to [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. [redacted] Comment: [redacted] described [redacted] as a very professional and security-conscious person who confided in [redacted] because of their unique personal relationship. [redacted] in his capacity as an institute personnel officer, was the first individual to interview [redacted] upon his transfer to the information center [redacted] requested basic biographic data and acknowledged being acquainted with several individuals listed by [redacted] particularly [redacted] who had a GRU officer serve as Deputy Chief of Intelligence for the Far Eastern Military District in the early 1950's. [redacted] owned dachas near each other and while not close friends, held each other in high respect. In addition to [redacted] was acquainted with (FNU) ((Prudnikov)) who was active in Western Europe and Germany for the KGB, (FNU) ((Gradoselskiy)) who had served as a KGB official in Poland and Germany, and (FNU) ((Gridniyev)) who served as KGB Deputy Chief for Administration and Supply. A sense of trust had therefore been developed over many years of mutual association with top level KGB and GRU officers.) [redacted] Comment: Prudnikov may be identical with Mikhail Sidorovich Prudnikov, dob circa 1912, a senior Soviet intelligence official whose memoirs of operations during and after World War Two have been published in the USSR. CIA records do not identify any individual named Grodoselskiy or Gridniyev as having served in Soviet intelligence.)

5. [redacted] volunteered the information regarding the Vietnam prisoners during one of many private conversations during the late 1960's and early 1970's. His duties were not particularly demanding after his years as an administrator in the KGB. He was often finished with his work in the early afternoon and, rather than go home or engaged in outside interests, held informal discussions in his office. [redacted] Comment: [redacted] stated that he was the person most frequently chosen by [redacted] for private conversations.) Topics primarily involved [redacted] personal affairs and health, but also included political topics. During one of these sessions 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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[Redacted]

7.

[Redacted]

Comment: CIA records contain no independent confirmation of the details
of [Redacted] career provided here.)

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[Redacted]