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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

2 March 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable Henry A. Kissinger
Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs

SUBJECT: Supplementary Comment on Report Concerning
U.S. Prisoners Allegedly Held by Viet Cong

1. A recent report from [redacted] contained the following statement attributed to a Viet Cong district-level cadre with access to the Viet Cong Tay Ninh Province Current Affairs Committee:

"The list of over 500 U.S. prisoners announced recently is not a complete one. In fact, there are more than a thousand of them. The U.S. does not know about the others and presumes them dead. We will keep the high-ranking officers, the engineers, and others to motivate them, and then we will let them go when real peace has come."

2. Subsequent to the reporting of the above,

[redacted] admitted that he personally did not believe the cadre's statement to be true. He considered it rather an example of the type of hyperbole which higher-level cadre often use to impress their juniors with the importance and success of the Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN). It is [redacted] personal belief that COSVN may well be holding ten or twelve U.S. prisoners of war whose names have not been included in lists given

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to the U.S. as hostages to be used to put pressure on the U.S. to assure compliance with the Ceasefire Agreement. He further believed that after the usefulness of these prisoners to the Viet Cong had diminished they would be moved to Laos and permitted to emerge from the backwoods one by one. It should be emphasized that these beliefs, both as to the existence of the prisoners and as to the Viet Cong's intentions regarding them, are not supported by facts known to [redacted] and represent his "educated guess."

3. We are relaying the foregoing as putting the original report in proper perspective.

[redacted]

W. E. Colby
Acting Deputy Director for Plans

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