

CIA CABLE

86836

INFO: J3-1 J5-1 SACSA-4, SECDEF-7 ASD/ISA-5
DIA-15 CSA-1 CNO-8 CSAF-4 CMC-3
ASD/SA-1 FILE-1(SI)CAC/LEF

DIRECTORATE OF PLANS

STATE/INR DIA INR/SEC/DC DCS/OP AD AD/STAFF

SERVICE HQ AD U

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011870Z

CITE TOCS-314/09796-59

DIST 1 JULY 1969

COUNTRY LAOS/NORTH VIETNAM
DOI DECEMBER 1968
SUBJECT PATHET LAO TRANSFER OF ALL AMERICAN PRISONERS
FROM LAOS TO NORTH VIETNAM

ACR

SOURCE

ROGER HALL
8715 First Ave., Apt. 827
Silver Spring, MD 20910
301-585-3361

1. IN LATE DECEMBER 1968, 27 AMERICANS HELD PRISONER

BY THE PATHET LAO PL, AND THREE OTHER PRISONERS BELIEVED

TO BE EITHER THAI OR LAO, WERE ASSEMBLED IN BAN HANG LONG

WH 132629/ IN HOUA PHAN PROVINCE BEFORE BEING SENT TO NORTH

VIETNAM. THE 27 AMERICANS REPRESENTED ALL AMERICANS THE PL

*Ref to indicators
not inside
here as well
as prison(s)*

DA possibly correct 7 PL in Laos and 159 days

DIA #150

Encl 150

9/9/03
(S-47,601/0044)

1-539

[REDACTED]

REPORT NO. CS-311/02870-00

DATE DISTR. 2 April 1969

COUNTRY: Laos
DOI : May 1965

SUBJECT: American Prisoners, Pathet Lao/North
Vietnamese National Military Headquarters,
Chinese, and Pathet Lao/Thai Liberation
Army Activities in the Sam Neua Area

SCOPE : Laos, Vientiane (28 February 1969)

SOURCE : [REDACTED]

1. In early May 1965, six Americans were imprisoned in a compound at VH 192359 in the vicinity of the Pathet Lao/North Vietnamese Army (PL/NVA) National Military Headquarters at VH 192353 in Houa Phan Province, about 18 kilometers east of Sam Neua (VH 0157). The American prisoners were a colonel and five captains, who were downed by antiaircraft fire during a series of airstrikes against the PL/NVA headquarters in early May 1965. The compound was a temporary holding facility and foreign prisoners were later transported to Hanoi.

[REDACTED]

2. A portion of the prison compound was a cave, approximately two meters high at the entrance by three meters wide and five meters deep. A roofed enclosure about five meters long was abutted to each side of the

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Intelligence Information Cable

PRIORITY
IN 15550

PAGE 1 OF 2 P/

STATE/INR	DIA	NMCC/MC	SECDEF	JCS	ARMY	NAVY	AIR	CIA/NMCC	NIC	NSA	SOO	ONE
D/NPIC		D/IAS						GER	FBI	DCB	IRB	AID

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CITE TDCS -314/08455-68

Content UNCLASSIFIED

056375

DIST 21 MAY 1968

per
date 8 NOV 1975

COUNTRY: LAOS

DOI: EARLY JANUARY 1968

SUBJECT: PROPAGANDA DISPLAY OF FOUR AMERICAN PILOTS IN
HOUA PHAN PROVINCE

ACQ:

SOURCE:

1. DURING THE PATHET LAO MEQ NEW YEAR CELEBRATION OF 1966, WHICH FELL BETWEEN 28 DECEMBER 1966 AND 3 JANUARY 1967, FOUR AMERICAN PILOTS WERE DISPLAYED FOR PROPAGANDA PURPOSES IN BAN HANG LONG (VH 1262). DURING THE HALF HOUR THAT THE PILOTS WERE ON DISPLAY, A PATHET LAO PROPAGANDIST EXPLAINED TO THE VILLAGERS

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IN 15550

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PAGE 2 OF 2 PAGES

(classification)

(dissem controls)

THAT THE PILOTS WOULD NOT BE KILLED, BUT WOULD BE HELD FOR PRISONER EXCHANGE AFTER THE START OF PEACE NEGOTIATIONS. THE PILOTS APPEARED TO BE IN GOOD HEALTH AND VILLAGERS SAID THEY HAD RECEIVED GOOD TREATMENT; THEY WERE GETTING MILK AND OTHER FOODS TO WHICH THEY WERE ACCUSTOMED. THE PROPAGANDIST TOLD THE VILLAGERS THE PILOTS' NAMES, BUT SAI VANG HEU COULD NOT REMEMBER THEM.

2. FIELD DISSEM: STATE ARMY AIR USMACV 7TH AIR FORCE CINCPAC
PACFLT ARPAC PACAF
REPORT CLASS

211725Z MAY 68

[REDACTED] THE SOURCE LOOKED
AT PHOTOGRAPHS AND IDENTIFIED ONE PRISONER AS CAPTAIN
DAVID L. HEDLICKA, AO 3665742. HE SAID THAT ANOTHER
RESEMBLED CAPTAIN JAMES W. LEWIS, AO 2211197, BUT LOOKED
MUCH OLDER THAN THE MAN IN THE PHOTOGRAPH. THE OTHER
PRISONERS WERE SMALLER AND RESEMBLED LIEUTENANT JUNIOR
GRADE WILLIAM E. SWANSON, 543832 AND CAPTAIN THEODORE
E. DRYZAK, FV 3259659.

L [REDACTED]

CIA?

DATE 20 JUNE 1977
IN 319123

INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION CABLE

PAGE 1 OF 4 PAGES

I [REDACTED] I
[REDACTED]

DISSEMINATION AND EXTRACTION OF INFORMATION CONTROLLED BY ORIGINATOR
DISTRIBUTION TO: SDO

I [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

COUNTRY LAOS/SRV

DOI

[REDACTED]

B

SUBJECT

RECORDS MAINTAINED BY A SENIOR LAO GOVERNMENT
AND COMMUNIST PARTY OFFICIAL LISTING AMERICAN
MIA FROM THE WAR IN LAOS

ROGER HALL
3715 First Ave., Apt. 827
Silver Spring, MD 20910
301-565-3361

ACQ

[REDACTED]

D E

SOURCE

[REDACTED]

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I [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

(Classification)

1.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

LPDR MINISTER OF NATIONAL

DEFENSE KHAMTAI SIPHANDON [REDACTED] MAINTAINS IN

THE MINISTRY A CENTRAL AND HIGHLY CLASSIFIED RECORD OF AMERICAN
PILOTS CAPTURED BY LAO AND VIETNAMESE COMMUNIST FORCES DURING

THE WAR IN LAOS. [REDACTED] THIS RECORD ALSO PROVIDES

DETAILS ON THE DISPATCH OF CAPTURED PILOTS TO PRISONER OF WAR

(POW) CAMPS AT SEVERAL LOCATIONS IN THE NORTHERN SECTOR OF THE

SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM (SRV) INCLUDING THE SON TAY CAMP.

[REDACTED] THIS RECORD HAD BEEN KEPT FROM THE

OUTSET OF THE WAR, AND PREVIOUSLY HELD IN SAFEKEEPING AT

KHAMTAI'S FORMER MILITARY HEADQUARTERS IN SAM NEUA. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

2. [REDACTED] REMARKED THAT IT IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT COMPLETE

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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(classification)

INFORMATION ON AMERICANS MISSING OR KILLED IN ACTION WILL EVER BE RELEASED SO LONG AS THE U.S. GOVERNMENT REFUSES TO ABIDE BY THE PROVISIONS OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT TO HEAL THE WOUNDS OF WAR, AND THE 17 POINTS INCLUDED IN FORMER PRESIDENT RICHARD M. NIXON'S LETTER TO SRV PRESIDENT TON DUC THANG.

[REDACTED]

B

3.

[REDACTED]

B

4. FIELD DISSEM: NONE

[REDACTED]

I

REPORT NO. CS-311/10032-69

DATE DISTR 6 NOVEMBER 1969

COUNTRY LAOS

DOI JUNE - 28 SEPTEMBER 1969

SUBJECT LOCATION OF A PRISON HOUSING LAO INMATES
SOUTHEAST OF THE ROUTES 911/9113 JUNCTION IN
KHAMMOUANG PROVINCE

ACQ LAOS, VIENTIANE /27 OCT 69/

SOURCE [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

1. AS OF 28 SEPTEMBER 1969, A PRISON LOCATED IN A CAVE ON THE NORTH FACE OF A KARST FORMATION /PHA THAPACHON/ AT VE BESS, APPROXIMATELY 13 KILOMETERS SOUTHEAST OF THE ROUTES 911/9113 JUNCTION IN KHAMMOUANG PROVINCE, HOUSED 34 LAO INMATES. PRIOR TO JUNE 1969, SIX AMERICAN AIRMEN HAD BEEN INTERNED IN THE PRISON. IN JUNE, THE SIX INTERNEES WERE SENT TO HANOI. PRIOR TO THIS TIME, THE PRISON HAD ALSO BEEN UTILIZED AS A TEMPORARY WAY STATION FOR OTHER FOREIGN CAPTIVES IN BOUALAPHA DISTRICT. COMMENT.

IN MID-JUNE 1969, A RELIABLE [REDACTED] LEARNED FROM A SENIOR PATHET LAO OFFICER THAT THE ABOVE PRISON HOUSED A TOTAL OF 17 FOREIGN AIRMEN, INCLUDING 12

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Date [REDACTED]

(classification)		(distribution controls)					(for field distribution see final paragraph)	
STATE	DIA	ARMY	NAVY	AIR	NSA	CRS		
	IAS							

~~SECRET 30 11/27/72 11/27/72~~

AMERICANS, THREE THAIS AND TWO FILIPINOS, SEE TDCS-314/09799-69./

COMMENT. SOURCE WAS UNABLE TO LEARN HOW THE FOREIGN AIRMEN WERE TRANSPORTED TO HANOI./

2. THE PRISON COMPOUND WAS ENCLOSED BY WOOD AND WIRE FENCING AND TRENCHES PROTECTED THE FRONT PERIMETER. THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF THE TRENCHES WAS TO PROVIDE CLOSE-IN DEFENSE SHOULD IT BECOME NECESSARY. AN 11-MAN GUARD FORCE, COMMANDED BY LIEUTENANT X O N G, WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE INNER SECURITY OF THE PRISON COMPOUND. THE FORCE MAINTAINED A TWO-MAN, FOUR-HOUR DUTY ROSTER TWENTY-FOUR HOURS A DAY. THE TWO GUARDS STOOD THEIR POSTS AT A GUARD HOUSE LOCATED NEAR THE FRONT GATE. EACH GUARD WAS ARMED. SECURITY OUTSIDE THE COMPOUND WAS MAINTAINED BY A PATHET LAO UNIT COMMANDED BY B O U N K E U T H.

3. THREE NORTH VIETNAMESE ADVISORS, LIEUTENANT O N G H E U A G, O N G T O N G AND O N G T H U C, LIVED IN THE PRISON COMPOUND. IN ADDITION TO THEIR ADVISORY DUTIES, THE THREE CONDUCTED A POLITICAL REEDUCATION COURSE FOR THE PRISONERS.

4. THREE MEALS, CONSISTING MAINLY OF RICE, WERE SERVED DAILY AT 0700, 1200 AND 1700 HOURS. THE RICE, OBTAINED FROM VILLAGERS [REDACTED] WAS COOKED BY THE INDIVIDUAL PRISONERS. THE GUARDS CONSUMED THEIR MEALS WHILE STANDING DUTY. [REDACTED] COMMENT. GUARDS RECEIVED 700 PATHET LAO XIP MONTHLY. THERE WAS NO FAMILY SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCE./

5. [REDACTED] COMMENT. ANALYSIS OF PHOTOGRAPHY DATED 9 AND 24 SEPTEMBER AND 16 OCTOBER 1969 REVEALED THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITY IN THE VICINITY OF THE REPORTED BAN THAPACHON WE 8803/ PRISON-

A. AN ACTIVE TRAIL DEPARTS ROUTE 91 AT WE [REDACTED], LEADS TO A POSSIBLE CAVE AT WE 887840, THEN CONTINUES AROUND THE WESTERN EDGE OF THE KARST TO ANOTHER POSSIBLE

CAVE ENTRANCE AT WE 878650. THE TRAIL CONTINUES EAST ALONG THE NORTHERN FACE OF THE KARST TO AN AREA OF CONCENTRATED ACTIVITY AT WE 886049.

B. HEAVY FOOT TRAIL ACTIVITY AROUND THE BASE OF THE KARST AT WE 886049 INDICATES A POSSIBLE CAVE ENTRANCE AT THIS LOCATION. THE AREA IN FRONT OF THE POSSIBLE CAVE ENTRANCE APPEARS TO BE ENCLOSED BY POSSIBLE FENCES ON THE EAST AND WEST SIDES, EXTENDING FROM THE BASE OF THE KARST TO THE EDGE OF THE RIVER. THE UNDERBRUSH APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN CLEARED FROM BENEATH THE TREE CANOPY BETWEEN THE KARST AND THE RIVER. POSSIBLE TRENCHES WERE OBSERVED IMMEDIATELY IN FRONT OF THE POSSIBLE CAVE ENTRANCE. ONE SMALL HUT WAS VISIBLE ON THE RIVER'S EDGE AT WE 886091.

C. SMALL ROW CROP PLOTS WERE OBSERVED ALONG THE SOUTH BANK OF THE RIVER AT WE 883501, WE 889050, AND WE 889052. LIGHT VEHICULAR TRACKING WAS VISIBLE LEADING TO A POSSIBLE TRUCK PARK/OFFLOADING POINT ON THE NORTH BANK OF THE RIVER AT WE 883501. A FOOT TRAIL FORDS THE RIVER AT THIS POINT TO LINK UP WITH THE MAIN EAST-WEST TRAIL RUNNING ALONG THE NORTHERN FACE OF THE KARST.

6. FIELD DISSEM. STATE ARMY AIR USIACV 7TH AIR FORCE CINCPAC PACFLT ARPAC PACAF TFA/HKP [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

HENRY B. GONZALEZ, TEX.
JOHN JOSEPH MOAKLEY, MASS.
PATRICIA SCHROEDER, COLO.
RICHARD L. OTTINGER, N.Y.
TOM HARKIN, IOWA
JIM LLOYD, CALIF.

REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

PAUL N. MCCLOSKEY, JR., CALIF.
BENJAMIN A. GILMAN, N.Y.
TENNYSON GUYER, OHIO

U.S. House of Representatives

SELECT COMMITTEE ON MISSING PERSONS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

ROOM 3334, HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING ANNEX 2

Washington, D.C. 20515

NINETY-FOURTH CONGRESS

G. V. MONTGOMERY, MISS., CHAIRMAN

J. ANGUS MAC DONALD
STAFF DIRECTOR
(202) 225-5745

24 March 1976

Chuck:

Attached is the memo for the record of an interview I conducted with Vang Pao. I'm sending a copy of the interview to Vang Pao to be certain it is an accurate account of what he said; to the CIA agent who accompanied him; and to the CIA.

The two reports on live American prisoners or collaborators are clearly of most importance to the Select Committee. Vang Pao is utterly convinced of the validity of both cases.

We would like an evaluation of these two reports and, if possible, a track record of attempts to verify these reports.

We would also be interested in any comments you may have on other items included in the interview.

Thanks.



Job Dittberner

EVALUATION OF INFORMATION PROVIDED BY
GENERAL VANG PAO

On 18 March 1976, General Vang Pao presented his views on various aspects of the U.S. PW/MIA subject as it pertains to Laos and provided information he considered reliable on two reports concerning live Americans.

In his first report, Vang Pao stated that from two independent sources, he learned in March-April 1975 of a single American who was last seen near Lak Sao in Khammouane Province, Laos. He said the American was being held by the Vietnamese, who he thought were keeping the American because of his technical expertise. Vang Pao further stated that he attempted a helicopter rescue operation of this American, involving his transporting an agent to a location near Lak Sao. This agent, who was to rescue the American and return with him to the rendezvous point, never returned to the agreed location. Later in the conversation, he stated that, except for the one American sighted near Lak Sao, no Americans were alive in Laos.

As a result of this report, contact was established with a former USDAO Vientiane official who provided the actual facts surrounding the incident. This official, who was deeply involved in the Charles Dean and Neil Sharman case, selected an agent to penetrate the suspected location where Dean and Sharman were being held (Lak Sao/Kham Keut area) in approximately February 1975. This agent was tasked to investigate and determine whether the two individuals were there. After receiving proper authority for the agent dispatch, the agent was taken to General Vang Pao in Military Region II. From there, he and another agent were taken by helicopter to a remote Lao Government outpost within two-three days walking distance of the suspected detention facility. To the recollection of the former USDAO official, the dispatch occurred in late February or early March 1975. The agent was to return no later than thirty days after dispatch. The USDAO official departed Vientiane in April 1975, and to the best of his knowledge, the agent had not returned prior to that time. In fact, to date, no information has been received which would indicate that this agent ever returned to friendly control.

Vang Pao's allegation that the American was being held by the Vietnamese and was being used for his technical expertise to defuse mines and bombs was totally fabricated based on known facts. It is known that Dean and Sharman were captured and held by the Pathet Lao, not the Vietnamese, and that Dean and Sharman would certainly have no ability to defuse mines and bombs. Furthermore, the agent dispatch was for the purpose of ascertaining whether or not Dean and Sharman were in the suspected area, and was not, as Vang Pao stated, geared toward a rescue attempt.

His second report concerned an allegation that from 8-10 young American pilots were being held by the Vietnamese.

Vang Pao believed that the Americans "broke" under Vietnamese pressures and promised cooperation in exchange for survival and increased comforts. According to Vang Pao, their cooperation primarily involved technical knowledge relating to defusing unexploded ordnance, and it was further suggested that these Americans could be used for their technical knowledge of American tactics.

Vang Pao stated that the Vietnamese moved the Americans to locations where the need for defusing was greatest, i.e., Sam Neua, along the Ho Chi Minh Trail, and possibly on the Plain--des Jarres.

Vang Pao stated that he was certain that this group was being held, and that there were "many, many reports" he thought which related to this group. He stated that the reports were received during the time frame of 1968 to 1975. The last known location of this group was alleged to be at Sam Neua in 1973.

Regarding this second report, there is absolutely no factual data to substantiate Vang Pao's information. It is considered significant that Vang Pao's first mention of this group of Americans was during a 16 January 1974 conversation with Congressman Benjamin A. Gilman (Rep - N.Y.) in view of the fact that he claimed that he had received reports relating to this group as early as 1968.

Subsequent investigation by U.S. Embassy personnel of Vang Pao's allegations revealed that a member of his household staff had obtained the information in early January 1974 from an unidentified Pathet Lao source in Vientiane. This unidentified source alleged that in November 1973 he had personally observed Americans working with the North Vietnamese near the Demilitarized Zone separating North and South Vietnam. The source

further alleged that the Americans were not restrained in any manner. Vang Pao stated that he might have additional information within the following two months. However, he was unable to contact the source or substantiate the information. Moreover, on 17 October 1973, Vang Pao told a visiting National League of Families Delegation in Vientiane that he believed it possible that the North Vietnamese may still be holding some American prisoners in North Vietnam. But he stated that this was only his opinion, and that he had no firm information to substantiate his beliefs.

It is noteworthy that the report Vang Pao provided during his March 1976 interview contained information that he had not provided to Rep. Gilman in their January 1974 meeting. For example, in 1974, Vang Pao had stated that the Americans were being exploited to gain technical information; however, he had not made reference to their breaking under Vietnamese pressure and collaborating by defusing ordnance. Furthermore, he had not previously mentioned his recent allegations that the Americans had been employed in Sam Neua and were last known to have been there in early 1973. As has been the case in the past, Vang Pao could not provide any firm evidence to substantiate his new information.

There are several known facts which would tend to further discredit Vang Pao's information.

1. He stated that the last known location of the group of American pilots was in Sam Neua in 1973. However, Mr. Emmet Kay, U.S. Civilian, who was captured on 7 May 1973, was moved into the Sam Neua area on 11 June 1973 and was held in three different locations in the area until his release on 18 September 1974. If a group of 8-10 Americans had been in Sam Neua in early 1973, Mr. Kay would, in all probability, have heard something about them. However, Mr. Kay stated that he had no information concerning other U.S. personnel being held in Laos.

2. Vang Pao stated that the group of Americans were pilots. However, it is extremely unlikely that pilots would be technically qualified to defuse ordnance. All available information indicates that no U.S. PWs were ever exploited, or even approached, for the purpose of personally utilizing their technical skills for the enemy. For the most part, the U.S. PWs experienced limited interrogations regarding their technical knowledge.

3. It is also highly unlikely that the North Vietnamese would be moving and utilizing American prisoners in Laos.

Vang Pao never mentioned, in any of his allegations, where the alleged prisoners had been captured. However, information provided by U.S. returnees during Operation Homecoming indicated that U.S. personnel captured in North Vietnam were kept in that country until they were released; similarly, the nine U.S. personnel and the Canadian who were captured in Laos were all captured by North Vietnamese forces. They were all moved as expeditiously as possible into North Vietnam for detention and also remained there until their release in Hanoi.

4. Although not specifically related to Vang Pao's report, there were several reports alleging to the detention of from one to nine U.S. PWs in the Panhandle region of Laos during the late 1973 to early 1975 time frame. Subsequent polygraph examinations determined that most of these reports were fabricated. None of these reports made any reference to U.S. PWs performing any type of technical operation.

In view of the above-mentioned remarks and the fact that Vang Pao has been known to provide unsubstantiated, and perhaps embellished or fabricated information in the past, there is no evidence to lend any credence to his report regarding the alleged 8-10 American pilots.

Other aspects of the PW/MIA prospects in Laos
that Vang Pao discussed

- Vang Pao's statement that the North Vietnamese dictated that all American prisoners captured by the Pathet Lao be turned over to North Vietnam is not borne out by the facts. Although such a policy may have existed in theory, there is no evidence that it was carried out in practice. Throughout the years of U.S. involvement in Laos, 13 U.S. personnel were known to have been captured and held by the Pathet Lao and not turned over to the North Vietnamese.
- On the subject of record keeping, Vang Pao stated that the Pathet Lao were powerless and utterly dependent on the North Vietnamese. Furthermore, he expressed doubt that there was any record keeping among the Pathet Lao. His statement that there was no record keeping is not entirely true. It is reasonable to believe that the Pathet Lao kept records, however limited they might be, on some of their prisoners, particularly those held in the Sam Neua area. However, reliable information indicates that the Pathet Lao, in all probability, did not have an organized system or a requirement to account for enemy personnel or maintain records on crash or gravesites.

- Vang Pao's statement that there are no prisoners held at this time in Sam Neua is believed to be true. He went on to say that prisoners were not generally kept at Sam Neua, but that some may have been there for a few days on their way to North Vietnam. And he repeatedly emphasized that it was the Vietnamese, not the Pathet Lao, who kept all prisoners. In response to his remarks, it is known that the Sam Neua area was the only permanent detention facility holding U.S. prisoners. Three U.S. prisoners were known to have been held in Sam Neua and detained by the Pathet Lao, not the North Vietnamese. The nine U.S. and one Canadian who were captured in Laos, moved to Hanoi, and released during Operation Homecoming were all captured by the North Vietnamese, and none of them was ever held at Sam Neua.

- DIA agrees with Vang Pao that reports mentioning 60-100 American prisoners or 160-200 Americans held by the Pathet Lao in Laos are not plausible. It was further suggested that claims on the above-mentioned scale made by the Pathet Lao before "Operation Homecoming" may have indicated that the Pathet Lao knew of large numbers of American prisoners in North Vietnam, and identifying themselves with their Vietnamese allies, spoke of American prisoners in North Vietnam as "our prisoners." In actuality, the source of the report of 60-100 prisoners (John Everingham) was debriefed and admitted his information was a fabrication, and the report mentioning 160-200 Americans (Reverend Paul D. Lindstrom) had absolutely no basis in fact.

- When asked whether it was Pathet Lao practice to kill Americans they had captured, Vang Pao stated that he had no information on this but doubted it was a practice. There is no evidence to confirm or deny the existence of a Pathet Lao policy to kill captured Americans. DIA feels that it was not the general practice of the Pathet Lao to kill Americans they captured which is evidenced by the fact that a small number of U.S. personnel known to have been held by the Pathet Lao were not killed. However, this does not discount the possibility that there may have been isolated instances in which some U.S. personnel could have been captured and killed.

- Vang Pao said he heard no reports of Americans being in remote villages in Laos and spoke of the difficulties of sheer survival. DIA agrees with this statement.

- When asked about the possibility of American prisoners being held in South China as repeatedly reported by Reverend Lindstrom, Vang Pao said he could not speak with authority

on this matter, since it was outside of Military Region II, but he had no information on Americans being taken there. There is, in fact, no information which would confirm rumors that American prisoners are being held in South China, and there has never been a source of such rumors or reports who could provide any proof of this.

- Vang Pao stressed the great difficulties in locating and investigating crashsites, and his assertion is true. Some of the factors involved in the difficult task of locating crashsites in Laos are the environment of the karst and jungle terrain, lack of definitive crashsite locations, passage of time, and most important, the Pathet Lao unwillingness to allow teams to locate and investigate crashsites.
- Vang Pao's comments pertaining to the more unlikely prospects of finding remains are probably realistic views of the situation in Laos.
- Vang Pao's final remarks concerned SAR (Search and Rescue) efforts in his region of Laos. He spoke of successful operations and the conditions that made rescue impossible at some times. As a general comment pertaining to all of Southeast Asia, there were massive efforts to rescue every crewmember who was shot down or lost. For example, the Air Force Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service made more than 2,750 rescues under hostile conditions and an additional 1,328 rescues in nonhostile areas of Southeast Asia. However, there were occasions when such factors as hostile fire, inclement weather conditions, or heavily jungled terrain precluded successful rescue efforts.

SR 6-587 2

TELEGRAM

Foreign Service of the
United States of America

OUTGOING AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

Bright Light

DIST
AMB
DCM
POL-2
ARMA
AIRA

Charge:

SECRET
Classification

Control: 4789

Date: 28 FEB 68

CHRON

ACTION:	COMUSMACV MACSOG	FLASH	
	SEVENTH AF	FLASH	
INFO:	AMEMBASSY BANGKOK	IMMEDIATE	IMMEDIATE
	7/13 AF	IMMEDIATE	
	TASK FORCE ALPHA, NAKHON PHANOM	IMMEDIATE	

LIMDIS

SUBJECT: BRIGHT LIGHT - OP-2 CREWMEN

- CONCUR IN COPTER INSERTION OF 12-MAN BRIGHT LIGHT TEAM AT FIRST LIGHT TOMORROW IN AREA WHERE TWO OP-2 CREWMEN ARE MISSING. / RECOMMEND PERMISSION BE OBTAINED FROM EMBASSY BANGKOK TO RON TEAM TONIGHT AT NAKHON PHANOM.
- WISH POINT OUT THAT FAILURE TO FOLLOW PROCEDURES CLEARLY OUTLINED IN PARA TWO OF JPRC JOINT MEMO OF AGREEMENT LED TO UNNECESSARY DELAY IN IMPLEMENTING JPRC PHASE OF RESCUE OPERATION.

20 FEB 68 4:41

2350
 SULLIVAN
 INFORMATION
 PROCESSED
 2/20/68

SECRET

Classification

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FORM 27-7 U.S.

CN: 9716

RECD: 23 JUL 71

P
A9

ACTION
CHARCS-2

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

SECRET

INFO
POL-2
CHRON
D/CHRON
5/

R 2311:3Z JUL 71
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC
RUMJNS/AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
INFO RUMJIR/AMEMBASSY SAIGON
RHSMVA/COMUSMACV
BT
SECRET BANGKOK 10146

EXDIS

EXDIS

(POW/MIA)
CAPTION REMOVED PER
S/S - IRM / SRD - ELIJAH KELLY
MEMORANDUM OF 7/20/82

COMUSMACV FOR JPRC

SUBJ: POW'S - OFFER

A9

REF: VIENTIANE 5354

1. AS OF 1600 HOURS JULY 23 [REDACTED] HAS STILL NOT CONTACTED
EMBOFF. WE WILL MAKE NO FURTHER EFFORT TO CONTACT HIM.

A9

2. HOWEVER, IF [REDACTED] DOES CONTACT US WE PLAN TO TELL HIM
THAT WE HAVE RECEIVED FINAL INSTRUCTIONS FROM WASHINGTON
STATING THAT CONTACT MUST BE MADE WITH AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE AND
THAT NO FURTHER CONTACTS SHOULD BE MADE HERE ON THIS MATTER.

A9

3. THIS IS CONSISTENT WITH THE FACTS AND WITH WHAT WE
HAVE TOLD [REDACTED] IN THE PAST. ALSO THIS WILL PROTECT THE
FACT THAT CONTACT HAS ALREADY BEEN MADE IN VIENTIANE IF
[REDACTED] DOES NOT KNOW. GP-3.

A9

A9

NEWMAN

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DECLASSIFIED BY [REDACTED] DATE 3/31/83
RELEASED UNDER E.O. 13526
PORTIONS WITH [REDACTED] INFORMATION
() MATERIAL NON-RELEVANT TO POW/MIA DELETED
REVIEWER [Signature]

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CLASSIFIED

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SECRET

CN: 7863

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16 Jun 1971

R 151023Z JUN 71
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC
INFO RUMJIR/AMEMBASSY SAIGON
RUMJFS/AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
RHM SMVA/COMUSMACV
RUFNCR/USDEL PARIS
BT

(POW/MIA)
CAPTION REFERENCE
S/O - IEM/SAD - S. DATE 1/1/71
MEMORANDUM OF 7/29/72

SECRET BANGKOK 8296

EXDIS **FXDIS**
MACV FOR JOINT PRISONER RECOVERY CENTER

DEPARTMENT OF STATE IS INFO / OPS DATE 3/31/73
DECLASSIFIED UNDER E.O. 11652 () INITIAL () INITIAL A5
RECOVERY CENTER 17012 () INITIAL () INITIAL A9
PORTIONS WITHHELD AS () INITIAL INFORMATION

SUBJECT: PRISONERS OF WAR

() DELIBERATIVE PROCESSING INFORMATION
() MATERIAL NON-RELEVANT TO POW/MIA DELETED

REF: A. STATE 90110
B. BANGKOK 6431

REVIEWER *M. M. M.*

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1. EMBASSY OFFICER MET WITH [REDACTED] JUNE 16 AND DISCUSSED FURTHER PROPOSAL TO RECOVER AMERICAN PRISONERS BEING HELD IN SAM NEUA PROVINCE OF LACS. EMBOFF TOLD HIM THAT WE FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE THAT PRISONERS COULD BE BROUGHT OUT AS [REDACTED] HAD EARLIER PROPOSED BECAUSE OF PATRIOTIC LAO AND NORTH VIETNAMESE POLICY ON PRISONERS. [REDACTED] SAID THAT THIS DID NOT CONCERN PAST PL POLICY NONETHELESS IT WAS DIFFICULT TO CONCEIVE OF SITUATION WHERE NORTH VIETNAMESE WOULD BE UNAWARE OF EXISTENCE OF CAMP AND FROM WHAT WE KNEW THEY WOULD NOT LET AMERICAN PRISONERS HELD THERE BE REMOVED WITHOUT A FIGHT. IT WAS THE DANGER THAT SUCH A FIGHT POSED FOR THE PRISONERS THEMSELVES WHICH WORRIED US MOST ABOUT [REDACTED] PROPOSAL AND WITHOUT MORE INFORMATION ON WHAT HE AND HIS LAOTIAN FRIEND HAD IN MIND IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR US TO AUTHORIZE ANY MILITARY OR SEMI-MILITARY OPERATION TO FREE THEM. EMBOFF REITERATED THAT THE BEST WAY FOR US TO OBTAIN THIS INFORMATION WOULD BE TO PUT LAO PRINCE IN DIRECT CONTACT WITH AMERICAN AUTHORITIES WHO HAD EXPERTISE IN THE FIELD. EMBOFF EMPHASIZED THAT HE WAS NOT QUALIFIED TO MAKE ANY JUDGEMENT ON THE PROPOSAL AND SUGGESTED THAT [REDACTED] TRY AGAIN TO PERSUADE HIS FRIEND TO ESTABLISH DIRECT CONTACT WITH THE PEOPLE WHO COULD.

2. [REDACTED] SAID THAT HE DOUBTED THAT IT WOULD DO MUCH GOOD TO HAVE HIS FRIEND TALK TO AMERICAN AUTHORITIES SINCE PRINCE WAS ONLY PASSING ON INFORMATION WHICH HAD BEEN GIVEN TO HIM BY HIGH-RANKING PL OFFICIAL (IDENTIFIED AS [REDACTED] 7- PHONETIC) WHO WOULD ACTUALLY BE RESPONSIBLE FOR SEEING THAT THE PRISONERS

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WERE REMOVED FROM THE CAMP. ENSOFF ONCE AGAIN SAID THAT IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR U.S. TO AUTHORIZE OPERATION ON BASIS OF SCANTY INFORMATION NOW AVAILABLE AND THAT THEREFORE ONLY POSSIBLE COURSE THAT SEEMED AVAILABLE WAST TRY DEVELOPING MORE INFORMATION THROUGH PRINCE SINCE DIRECT CONTACT BETWEEN AMERICAN AND PL OFFICIAL WERE OBVIOUSLY IMPOSSIBLE.) SAID THAT HE WOULD TRY TO CONVINCHE HIS FRIEND OF THE NECESSITY OF THIS.

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3. ON SUBJECT OF REPORT [REDACTED] HAD EARLIER GIVEN ENSOFF THAT FIVE OR SIX AMERICANS WERE BEING HELD BY YAO TRIBESMEN IN NORTH-WESTERN LAOS, [REDACTED] SAID THAT HE HAD HEARD FROM ON OF THE TWO MEN HE HAD ASKED TO CHECK INTO MATTER AND HAD BEEN INFORMED THAT THERE WAS NOTHING TO THE STORY. HE SUGGESTED, HOWEVER, THAT HE WAIIL UNTIL HE HEARD FROM HIS OTHER SOURCE BEFORE DECIDING WHETHER OR NOT TO DROP THE MATTER COMPLETELY.

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4. COMMENT: THE SCENARIO IE RESCUE OF THE AMERICAN PRISONERS IN SAN NEUA GROWS MORE COMPLICATED WITH EACH MEETING AS IT BECOMES MORE AND MORE APPARENT THAT [REDACTED] INFORMATION HAS PASSED THROUGH MANY MONTHS BEFORE REACHING HIM. IT EEMS LIKELY THAT EVEN IF HE IS ABLE TO CONVINCHE HIS LAOTUAN FREIND THAT HE SHOULD ESTABLISH DIRECT CONTACT WITH AMERICAN AUTHORITY, WHICH DOES NOT SEEM LIKELY, THE PRINCE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO ENLIGHTEN US TO A MUCH GREATER EXTENT. ON RATHER MEAGER INFORMATION AVAILABLE HERE APPEARS [REDACTED] REFERRED TO MAY BE [REDACTED] NEWIAN

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ACTION: SS-45

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INFO: OCT-01 SSO-00 NSCE-00 CCO-00 1046 W

022943:

R 2310 JUL 71
FM: AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO: SECSTATE WASHDC 3993.
INFO: AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
CINCPAC
AMEMBASSY SAIGON

5378

PH: FOR SIEVERTS
CINCPAC FOR POLAD

SUBJECT: LAOS: POW/MIA: []

REF: VIENTIANE: 5354 (NOTAL)

1. CIRCUMSTANCES OF DISCLOSURE THAT HE WAS [] CONTACT IN LAOS ARE AS FOLLOWS. AT SOCIAL EVENT AT HIS HOME LAST NIGHT, CHIEF OF POLITICAL SECTION (HOWLAND) TOLD [] THAT HE HAD RECENTLY SPENT ONE HOUR DISCUSSING POW/MIA QUESTION FRUITLESSLY WITH LFP VIENTIANE REP SOTH PHETRASY AND HAD REACHED CONCLUSION AFTERWARDS THAT NO PROGRESS COULD BE MADE ON THIS ISSUE SINCE ALL POWS HAD PROBABLY BEEN REMOVED FROM LAOS AND TURNED OVER TO NORTH VIETNAMESE, WHO NOW CONTROL THEM. [] IMMEDIATELY OBJECTED AND SAID THAT THIRTY AMERICAN POWS ARE STILL LEFT IN LAOS, LOCATED IN SMALL TOWN OF MUONG PDUN (VH 5246) NEAR ABANDONED AIRSTRIP (L-60, VH 5040) AT MUONG SOI (VH 5241).

2. HOWLAND THEN REPLIED THAT SOME MONTHS AGO THAI NATIONAL IN BANGKOK HAD APPROACHED EMBASSY OFFICER WITH SIMILAR STORY INVOLVING TOWN OF MUONG SOI BUT THAT HE HAD NOT PLACED MUCH CREDENCE IN HIS STORY. [] TOOK:

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HOWLAND ASIDE AND SAID THAT ABOUT SIX MONTHS AGO, A
 COUSIN OF HIS, [REDACTED] CAME TO VIENTIANE
 TO SUGGEST THAT BECAUSE OF [REDACTED] EXCELLENT CONTACTS
 IN SAM NEUA PROVINCE, HE WOULD PROBABLY BE ABLE TO
 OBTAIN INFO ON AMERICAN POWS WHICH COULD BE PASSED TO
 USG FOR USE IN RESCUE OPERATIONS. [REDACTED] TOLD HIS
 COUSIN HE WAS CERTAIN HE COULD OBTAIN SUCH INFORMATION
 SINCE HE HAD FREQUENT CONTACT WITH "EMISSARIES FROM
 PATHET LAO" BUT THAT HE FEARED IF HE GOT IN TOUCH WITH
 AMERICANS HERE, NORTH VIETNAMESE WOULD GET WIND OF
 SITUATION AND ASSASSINATE HIM. HIS COUSIN THEN SAID HE
 HAD TRUSTWORTHY FRIEND NAMED [REDACTED] WHO WAS CLOSE
 TO AMERICANS IN BANGKOK AND COULD SERVE AS INTERMEDIARY.
 [REDACTED] AGREED TO MAKE OVERTURES TO SOURCES IN SAM
 NEUA AND TO UTILIZE HIS COUSIN AND [REDACTED] WHOM HE HAS
 NEVER MET FOR CONTACTS WITH USG. HOWLAND ASKED WHETHER
 CONTACTS IN PATHET LAO ZONE INCLUDED GENERAL
 SINGAPO, CHOUNRAMAY AND [REDACTED] EXPRESSED SURPRISE
 AND DENIED HE WAS INVOLVED.

3. AFTER MEETING WITH HIS COUSIN, [REDACTED] SAID HE
 PROCEEDED TO DEVELOP INFORMATION ON LOCATION OF THIRTY
 PRISONERS MENTIONED ABOVE. HE ALSO SAID HE BEGAN TO
 RECRUIT SMALL TEAM OF LAO GUERRILLAS.

[REDACTED] AND SAT BACK
 TO AWAIT NEWS FROM HIS COUSIN IN BANGKOK. HOWEVER,
 LATTER KEPT TELLING HIM THAT [REDACTED] WAS UNABLE
 TO DEVELOP RAPPORT WITH AMERICANS ON SUBJECT. [REDACTED]
 SAID HE WAS NOW "TIRED OF WAITING FOR [REDACTED]"
 AND HE HAD DECIDED TO RISK OPENING CONTACTS WITH
 AMERICANS HERE EVEN THOUGH "EVERYTHING HAS TO BE KEPT
 SECRET FOR FEAR OF ASSASSINATION."

4. [REDACTED] SAID THAT HE WANTED TO EXPRESS HIS GRATITUDE
 TO USG FOR EVERYTHING WE HAD DONE TO HELP LAOS BY
 HELPING US IN TURN TO RESCUE PRISONERS.

[REDACTED] DID NOT MENTION REWARD, BUT DID
 INDICATE THAT HE WANTED HIS OWN TEAM TO BE INVOLVED
 IN ANY RESCUE OPERATION.



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5. HOWLAND TOLD HIM THAT WE WERE NATURALLY QUITE INTERESTED IN ANYTHING TO DO WITH POWS IN LAOS BUT THAT THERE WERE MANY QUESTIONS WHICH WOULD HAVE TO BE ANSWERED BEFORE ANYTHING FURTHER COULD ENSUE. HOWLAND INDICATED THAT HE AND POW OFFICER DICK RAND WOULD BE GETTING IN TOUCH WITH [] SOMETIME NEXT WEEK TO DISCUSS SUBJECT FURTHER.

6. COMMENT: []

7. BELIEVE WE ARE IN POSITION TO FOLLOW THROUGH WITH [] AND BANGKOK CAN CUT OFF [] AS INTERMEDIARY. MIGHT BE BEST TO DO THIS GRADUALLY TO AVOID [] CARRYING STORY ELSEWHERE.

8. NEAREST CONFIRMED ALPHA CAMP LOCATIONS TO SITE WHICH MENTIONED ARE LOCATED SOME 30-35 KILOMETERS WEST OF MUONG SOI NEAR SAM NEUA. WE ARE SOMEWHAT SKEPTICAL BUT INTERESTED IN HIS STORY AND ARE PROCEEDING TO DEVELOP BETTER READING ON HIS BACKGROUND AND POSSIBLE MOTIVATIONS.

STEARNS.



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ACTION SS 30

INFO /0800 W

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FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7843
INFO AMEMBASSY SAIGON PRIORITY 2071

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~~SECRET~~ VIENTIANE 5542

EXDIS

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4

NLJ 91-426
By lig, NARA, Date 1-22-95

1. DURING COURSE POLISH RECEPTION LAST EVENING, I HAD BRIEF DISCUSSION WITH NORTH VIETNAMESE CHARGE. PRIOR TO OUR ENCOUNTER, HE HAD SPENT ABOUT ONE HALF HOUR IN SERIOUS CONVERSATION WITH SOVIET AMBASSADOR.

2. CHAN STARTED CONVERSATION BY REFERRING TO SAIGON PRESS REPORTS THAT HE AND I WERE IN REGULAR CONTACT. HE JOKINGLY SUGGESTED WE ISSUE JOINT COMMUNIQUE DENYING THESE CHARGES. I SUGGESTED THAT A JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE WOULD BE MORE AMUSING.

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3. I THEN SHIFTED TO SUBJECT OF PRESIDENT'S SPEECH, BUT BEFORE CHAN COULD REPLY, WE WERE JOINED BY JAPANESE AMBASSADOR AND THEN BY SOVIET MILITARY ATTACHE. CHAN CONFINED HIS ANSWER TO SAYING THAT HE HAD HEARD ONLY THE BBC SUMMARY AND HAD NOT SEEN THE FULL TEXT. I OFFERED TO SEND HIM TEXT IN ENGLISH, FOR WHICH HE THANKED ME. (I SENT IT AROUND TO HIM THIS MORNING).

4. AT THIS POINT, WE WERE JOINED BY TWO BRITISH PRESS TYPES, AND FORUM OBVIOUSLY HAD BECOME TOO PUBLIC FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION. CHAN CONSEQUENTLY SHIFTED TO A BANTERING LINE, THANKING US FOR DELIVERING AN F-111 TO THEM SO THAT THEY COULD STUDY ITS ELECTRONIC SYSTEM. HE ASKED SOVIET ATTACHE WHETHER



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SOVIETS HAD YET RECEIVED A FULL BRIEFING ON THE SYSTEM.
SINCE CONVERSATION WAS OBVIOUSLY BOUND TO DETERIORATE, I
BROKE OFF IN SEARCH OF VODKA.

5. COMMENT: IT SEEMS PROBABLE THAT MY PROSPECTS FOR DIS-
CREET CONVERSATIONS WITH CHAN WILL BE SERIOUSLY HANDICAPPED

PAGE 3 RUMJFS 5542 ~~SECRET~~
FOR SOME TIME BECAUSE OF UNFORTUNATE PRESS SENSATIONALISM
WHICH HAS FOCUSED ATTENTION ON U.S.-NVN CONTACTS HERE IN
VIENTIANE. ANY PUBLIC EXPOSURE IS ALMOST SURE TO DRAW UN-
HELPFUL SPECTATORS.

GP-2 SULLIVAN

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COUNTRY: Laos
 DATE: May 1965
 DATE DATE: 2 April 1968
 SUBJECT: American Prisoners, Pathet Lao/North Vietnamese National Military Headquarters, Chinese, and Pathet Lao/Thai Liberation Army Activities in the Ban Neua Area

675-275-2

SOURCE:

1. In early May 1965, six Americans were imprisoned in a compound at VE 192559 in the vicinity of the Pathet Lao/North Vietnamese Army (PL/NVA) National Military Headquarters at VE 192553 in Houa Phan Province, about 18 kilometers east of Ban Neua (VE 0157). The American prisoners were a colonel and five captains, who were downed by antiaircraft fire during a series of airstrikes against the PL/NVA headquarters in early May 1965. The compound was a temporary holding facility and foreign prisoners were later transported to Hanoi.

who was one of three interrogators who questioned the Americans. The other interrogators were a Chinese and a North Vietnamese. Toag Sing was a former T-6 pilot for the Lao government who defected to the Pathet Lao in May 1963.

2. A portion of the prison compound was a cave, approximately two meters high at the entrance by three meters wide and five meters deep. A roofed enclosure about five meters long was abutted to each side of the

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cave entrance. Wooden logs approximately four centimeters in diameter, and about three meters high were placed side by side to form the sides and front of the enclosure, which was roofed with woven bamboo strips. An interrogation building was approximately 50 meters west of the prison compound. A gate and guard post were at the front of the enclosure. The guard would open the gate to allow soldiers and villagers to view the prisoners. The prisoners had canvas cots and blankets in the enclosure where they slept. The prisoners at night but the compound was illuminated by a kerosene lantern. The colonel was the only prisoner moving about. [redacted] testified that he was about 6 feet 8 inches tall, blonde, and weighed approximately 250 pounds. He appeared to be in good physical condition.

3. In early May 1965 a Chinese mission, referred to as "the embassy," was in a cave at VH 192563. The mission had its own guards, cooks and typists. Toag Sing said that there were approximately 80 Chinese stationed at the Pathet Lao National Military Headquarters and that their primary mission was staff level logistical planning and support.

4. Pathet Lao units were screened and Pathet Lao soldiers of Thai origin were moved to the Pathet Lao National Military Headquarters. In mid-May 1965 there were approximately 30 Thai Pathet Lao members assembled there. These included Private Bounchan, about 32 years old, from Nong Khai, Thailand, and Private Bounlai, approximately 33 years old, from Udon, Thailand, both former members of the 3rd Pathet Lao Artillery Battalion. Bounchan and Bounlai. They said that all Thai Pathet Lao soldiers would be moved to Peking to join the Thai Liberation Army.

5. State Army Air USMACV 7th Air Force
CINCPAC PACFLT ARPAC PACAF

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Being reviewed
by CIA

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