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COMMITTEE CONFIDENTIAL

Stenographic Transcript of
HEARINGS
Before the

SELECT COMMITTEE ON POW/MIA AFFAIRS

UNITED STATES SENATE

DEPOSITION OF JAN SEJNA

Thursday, November 19, 1992

Washington, D.C.

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1 A. I would say the most important position was the
2 chief of staff of minister of defense, and after then first
3 secretary, because the chief of staff of minister of defense,
4 as I said before, everything would go to minister from foreign
5 countries, especially Soviet Union, would go through my hand.
6 Everything what goes through government, politburo, defense
7 council, I prepare.

8 I had special office which was Secretariat of the
9 defense council, which has all the documentation in their
10 hands. And, of course, I had those section which take care
11 about guests of minister, visitors, mostly Soviets, but any
12 visitors from any country. So I think there I had most
13 information which anybody could have.

14 Q. And your resume indicates you were chief of staff to
15 the minister of defense --

16 A. Right.

17 Q. -- in 1956.

18 A. Right.

19 Q. How long did you serve in that position?

20 A. Until 1964 -- 8 years. And after then I was the
21 First Secretary of the Communist Party.

22 And from there -- I want to finish this -- from that
23 position, chief of staff of minister of defense, I was
24 secretary of the defense council, which again I have to
25 repeat, not because I was secretary but because the power of

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1 the committee, the collegium of ministry, had meeting every
2 week, the defense council approximately every 2 weeks.

3 The members of the defense council were seven
4 members: First secretary and president of Czechoslovakia was
5 chairman; prime minister was member; minister of defense,
6 minister of Interior, which is like Soviet KGB; the chief of
7 state planning commission was member; and deputy to first
8 secretary, second secretary of the party.

9 Are they seven already or I forgot somebody? But
10 they were seven of the most important members in the
11 hierarchy.

12 Q. In the hierarchy of the Communist Party, where is
13 first secretary?

14 A. Well, the first secretary is the most powerful man,
15 or was, in the country, because without him nobody can do
16 anything, especially military. He was also chairman of the
17 defense council, of course, and without him you cannot do
18 anything, you know? Minister was in his office every Monday.
19 I report that was going on, he give me order what to do. So
20 he was the most important person.

21 Q. Did you have access to sensitive information in all
22 of these positions that you've detailed?

23 A. Absolutely. The highest secrecy.

24 Q. Did you have access to information on
25 Czechoslovakian military activities outside of Czechoslovakia?

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1 A. Yes, because most of these things must go through
 2 the defense council. It was not just some individual activity
 3 of some agent. But if it means every important activity,
 4 like, let's say in Korea or other places in whole world,
 5 trained couriers and all these things, of course it goes to
 6 defense council.

7 Q. And your access to this material was by reviewing
 8 messages and papers and discussions?

9 A. Sure. Plus I was sitting there, and when they
 10 discuss it I make notes. After then I must type it. It must
 11 go back to the minister, he sign it, go with that to
 12 president, like chairman of the council. He signed it, and I
 13 delivered it to members of the defense council or anybody who
 14 got order from defense council to do something -- foreign
 15 minister, anybody who was involved.

16 Q. Okay. You said your highest rank was major general?

17 A. Right.

18 Q. Is that a two-star general?

19 A. One.

20 Q. One.

21 A. One.

22 Q. So the U.S. equivalent would be a brigadier general?

23 A. I think correct.

24 Q. Next, I want to ask you some questions about your
 25 position as the defense secretary. How did you become the

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1 secretary of the defense council?

2 A. Because -- I have to explain it. Officially, who
3 was secretary was minister of defense. I was the -- I don't
4 know how to say that in English -- I was the guy who did
5 everything, who prepared everything, sitting in defense
6 council, make notes, and they changed something because to
7 defense council goes the -- everybody must, for anything,
8 mobilization or whatever, for an activity, present it to
9 defense council some documents.

10 So when they go through, usually we have like 12,
11 maybe 15 documents which defense council must approve, and the
12 session was always afternoon. And if they changed anything, I
13 make notes. After then, I had a special staff for defense
14 council which was in the secretariat of ministry of defense,
15 special guard. And when it was done, I must go through again
16 and sign it and deliver it to everyone who was concerned.
17 That is why I say I think it was many times Russians were
18 present and they delivered some orders.

19 Q. And you were in this position from 1956 to 1964?

20 A. Right.

21 Q. For 8 years.

22 A. Right.

23 Q. Okay. Was membership in the Communist Party
24 required for this position?

25 A. Oh, absolutely. Absolutely.

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1 Q. Is this a government position or a party position?

2 A. It was the party government, because if you can go
3 to Czechoslovakia, you see the documents which the defense
4 council passed, the defense council said to minister of
5 health, to minister of foreign affairs. They give them order.
6 Same like politburo is party, but they give order to
7 everybody. You know, nobody can move without them.

8 Later on, when I was already here, they changed the
9 name and make it the highest council of the -- of the defense
10 of the country, or something like that. They tried to make it
11 legal, because people complained it was actually illegal under
12 party. It was not under constitution, it was -- but who can
13 complain at that time?

14 Q. I'd like to focus on when you were there. In the
15 relationship between the Government and the party, which was
16 the most important?

17 A. To me? The party. The party was power.

18 Q. The party, in essence, controlled the Government?

19 A. Absolutely. Absolutely.

20 Q. During these 8 years that you were in this position,
21 would you describe the main individuals or the main
22 departments that you worked with, be they the Communist Party
23 or the military? Who did you have the most contact with
24 during these --

25 A. Well, the most important was, as they call it,

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1 administrative department. But they changed name many times
 2 because it was cover name. They were department A, after then
 3 department 11, after then department 14, and finally the name
 4 was Administrative Organs Department. So if you hear it you
 5 would think they take care of some administration or work.
 6 But it was the department which controlled military forces,
 7 everything that was related to defense, intelligence, and
 8 contracting. Generally, they controlled ministry of defense
 9 and ministry of the interior.

10 And I forgot to say before, last 4 years, I was also
 11 member of that department. I was first secretary of the party
 12 at the ministry of defense, and member of the department.

13 Q. So this would have been from 1960 to 1964?

14 A. No, from '64 to '68.

15 Q. Oh, okay.

16 A. I mean, from '84 -- '64 to '68. Sorry. '84, I was
 17 already here. It was the most important because these people
 18 are so powerful they even discuss if minister should be fired
 19 or not. What can I tell you?

20 Q. You indicated that you attended meetings. Who did
 21 you write reports for, or who did you report to?

22 A. Well, when I was chief of staff of minister to
 23 minister or defense council or this department. Those were
 24 the three major.

25 Q. Are you familiar with the term, insider? Would you

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1 classify yourself as an insider in the Government and in the
2 party during this time in Czechoslovakia?

3 A. Yes, I do. It means you are in.

4 MR. STIEN: Off the record.

5 (Discussion off the record.)

6 THE WITNESS: Yes.

7 BY MR. ERICKSON:

8 Q. Next, I'm going to go to information on POW's. In
9 your interview with our investigators, you stated that you had
10 knowledge about POW treatment during the Korean and Vietnam
11 Wars, is that correct?

12 A. Right.

13 Q. And you met with two investigators from our
14 committee approximately a month ago?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Would you describe -- did you contact them, or did
17 they contact you?

18 A. They contact me through DIA.

19 Q. In the interview, and in your book Red Cocaine, you
20 describe Czechoslovakian medical support to the North Koreans.

21 A. Right.

22 Q. I apologize for having you repeat a lot of
23 information that you've written about and given, but that's
24 the nature of a deposition, so would you describe for the
25 record what type of medical support Czechoslovakia gave to the

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AFTERNOON SESSION

(1:00 p.m.)

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Whereupon,

JAN SEJNA,

the witness on the stand at the time of recess, having been previously duly sworn, was further examined and testified as follows:

EXAMINATION BY COUNSEL FOR THE SELECT COMMITTEE (RESUMED)

BY MR. ERICKSON:

Q. General, once again is there any testimony that you have given previously that you would like to change or modify in any way?

A. No.

Q. I'm going to shift to the Vietnam War POW issue now. In your interview with two of our committee investigators, you stated that you recall two to three groups of 25 each, U.S. POW's taken from Vietnam to Czechoslovakia, and then on to the Soviet Union. Do you recall making such a statement?

A. Yes. I think I said 20 to 25. Not exactly 25, because I'm not sure if it was 25 or 24.

Q. What years did these trips take place?

A. I think first one was end of '65, or beginning '66. And other one '66. And the last one which I saw was the spring of '67.

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1 Q. And each one of these groups would have been roughly
2 20 to 25 American POW's?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Did you see the American POW's yourself?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. What was your duty at the time? And did it change
7 from '65 to '67, or were you in the same position?

8 A. I was in the same position.

9 Q. Which was?

10 A. First secretary of the Communist Party to minister
11 of defense.

12 Q. And how were these American POW's transported from
13 Vietnam to Prague?

14 A. Soviet airplanes, they escorted them, Soviets and
15 Czechs together. Counterintelligence took them to the
16 facility, and that's it. And three guys, or four guys I'm not
17 sure, they wait in Prague. They were the guys who were
18 actually the interrogators, because they already worked with
19 them when they stay in Prague.

20 Q. Approximately how many days or how many hours did
21 they stay in Prague?

22 A. 5 to 7 days, no more.

23 Q. And what was the reason or rationale to bring them
24 from Vietnam to Prague, rather than straight to the Soviet
25 Union?

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1 are wrong or right, never.

2 Q. Were you able to speak English at this time, or did
3 you have an interpreter?

4 A. Interpreter.

5 Q. Were you given a polygraph at this time?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Was there ever any correspondence written to
8 discredit you as a source of information?

9 A. I don't know.

10 Q. Then I trust you don't have any copy of any
11 correspondence that you're aware of?

12 A. No, no.

13 Q. I believe you indicated that DIA hired you in 1981.
14 Is that correct?

15 A. I think on April 7.

16 Q. Of 1981?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. How did you come to work for DIA?

19 A. I was recruited.

20 Q. Do you know who was responsible for hiring you and
21 why?

22 A. No.

23 Q. Do you believe that DIA trusted your information?

24 A. Well, they say yes, if it is true.

25 Q. Did any DIA officer ever talk to you about your

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