

OUTGOING MESSAGE

CHANNELS

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IDENTIFICATION

SECRET

MESSAGE MAN

740825

MESSAGE REFERENCE NUMBER

SOURCE REF:

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3		6		9		12	

TO:

[Redacted]

ELD

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165

ITEM NO: ①

DATE: AUGUST 25, 1974

SUBJECT: LAOS -- SOUVANNA OFF TO FRANCE; KAY REPORTEDLY TO BE RELEASED

REF : FBIS 16, 2507141 AUG, UNCL

FBIS 38, 2510352 AUG, UNCL

UPI - AUGUST 24, 1974

PRIME MINISTER SOUVANNA PHOUMA LEFT VIENTIANE EARLY TODAY FOR SEVERAL MONTHS CONVALESCENCE IN FRANCE. HE IS TRAVELLING ABOARD A SPECIAL MEDICALLY-EQUIPPED AND STAFFED CARAVELLE AIRCRAFT PROVIDED BY THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT. CONTRARY TO AN EARLIER ANNOUNCED ITINERARY, THE AIRCRAFT MADE ITS FIRST REST STOP IN CALCUTTA RATHER THAN BANGKOK. Y

ON THE HOMEFRONT, MEANWHILE, THE PATHET LAO HAVE STATED

DATE: 25 AUGUST 1974

ORIG: [Redacted]

UNIT: [Redacted]

EXT: [Redacted]

APPROVED FOR RELEASE

DATE: NOV 2002

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PUBLICLY THAT US CIVILIAN CONTRACT PILOT EMMET KAY WILL BE AMONG THE FIRST GROUP OF PRISONERS-OF-WAR TO BE RELEASED ON SEPTEMBER 12. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, THE ANNOUNCEMENT WAS MADE IN VIENTIANE YESTERDAY BY THE DEPUTY CHIEF OF THE LAO COMMUNIST CONTINGENT ON THE COALITION GOVERNMENT'S JOINT CENTRAL COMMISSION TO IMPLEMENT THE AGREEMENT. HE REPORTEDLY TERMED KAY'S REPATRIATION A "HUMANITARIAN AND GOODWILL GESTURE." 4

LIKE THE PATHET LAO INITIATIVE ON PRISONER EXCHANGES ITSELF, THE REPORTED PLAN FOR KAY'S EARLY RELEASE COMES AS A SURPRISE. THE COMMUNISTS HAD CONSISTENTLY ARGUED THAT THEY DID NOT CONSIDER HIM A PRISONER-OF-WAR BECAUSE HIS CAPTURE LAST MAY OCCURRED AFTER THE CEASE-FIRE AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED. MOREOVER, THERE WERE INDICATIONS THAT THE PATHET LAO MIGHT TRY TO LINK HIS EVENTUAL RELEASE TO POLITICAL CONCESSIONS BY WASHINGTON.

E-2 IMPDET.

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DATE: 25 AUGUST 1974

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