

REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Stenographic Transcript of  
HEARINGS  
Before the

SELECT COMMITTEE ON POW/MIA AFFAIRS

UNITED STATES SENATE

*see p. 67  
19*

DEPOSITION OF WILLIAM SULLIVAN

Monday, July 20, 1992

Washington, D.C.

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*There is a section  
taken at NSC level  
after 8:30*

U.S. SENATE DO NOT REMOVE SENATE SECURITY  
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1 In other words, had there been any CINCPAC forces  
2 in Laos, they would not have been under my direction. But  
3 because of the neutrality agreements we had no CINCPAC  
4 forces in Laos, so that I had as military only people who  
5 were designated as attaches.

6 METHOD

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8  
9 So I represented the President in the direction of  
10 my mission, which had about 2,000 people in it, and in the  
11 state to state relationships between the Government of the  
12 United States and the government of Laos.

13 Q. And that was the Royal Lao government at that  
14 point?

15 A. The Royal Lao government.

16 Q. What about oversight of Central Intelligence  
17 Agency operations within Laos?

18 A. Yes, very directly. They worked for me.

19 Q. Can you give us some idea of what your oversight  
20 responsibilities were of the CIA operations?

21 A. Well, the CIA station officer was on my staff. He  
22 attended my morning staff meetings. He checked out anything  
23 he wanted to do with me. He had a certain amount of leeway,  
24 but it was limited to those things which I had authorized.

25 Q. So there's no question that as Ambassador you were

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1 POWs were being kept in these caves?

2 A. No, but I got the sense that it was not a large  
3 number. That is, not in the teens, probably less than  
4 20.

5 Q. Were there attempts to obtain photographs,  
6 photoimagery of these locations?

7 A. Oh, yes. We photographed it day and night, never  
8 saw a white or recognizably Caucasian figure in any of it.

9 Q. Did you see caves that were appropriate?

10 A. Oh, the place is riddled with caves.

11 Q. Did you see anything that appeared to be a prison,  
12 any caves used as prisons?

13 A. No. Caves were used for military purposes there  
14 because they were subject to constant bombardment. So they  
15 sensibly stayed in caves.

16 Q. Were there ever propaganda statements made by  
17 Pathet Lao or North Vietnamese regarding the capture of U.S.  
18 prisoners of war in Laos that you were aware of?

19 A. Yes, sure.

20 Q. What was the nature of those statements?

21 A. Oh, they would usually put out a statement that  
22 so-and-so, and they would have his name and serial number,  
23 had been captured.

24 Q. So would that be the Pathet Lao that would do  
25 that?

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*Woodcock*

1 A. Depending on where it took place, but if it took  
 2 place in Laos the North Vietnamese would broadcast it over  
 3 Radio Pathet Lao, which was in Hanoi, and they would say  
 4 that this man has confessed his crimes and seriously regrets  
 5 having been duped by those criminal leaders in Washington  
 6 led by that monster, Lyndon Johnson, and assisted by that  
 7 foreign devil Sullivan, and so forth and so on.

8 Oh, you'd get a constant stream of that, and I'm  
 9 sure they've got a library full of it there at FBI.

*FBI*

10 Q. What was the sense within your embassy as to the  
 11 reliability of that type of propaganda statement?

12 A. Sometimes you could find a seed of information in  
 13 it that you could use constructively, but we became  
 14 again, they were not very imaginative and we became pretty  
 15 adept at reading what was the kernel of truth in whatever  
 16 they had to say.

*\* pompas ass*

17 Q. What's your memory as to the percentage of  
 18 Americans who were shot down over Laos who were actually  
 19 rescued?

20 A. I have no - I would say in the early years of the  
 21 time I was there, of those Americans who hit the ground  
 22 alive we got most of them because they were in friendly  
 23 territory.

24 Now again I'm talking only about northeast Laos.  
 25 This whole operation down in southeast we didn't control

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1 echelon toward some headquarters command structure. And  
2 those are the two areas in Laos that were headquarters  
3 command structures for the North Vietnamese forces.

*release  
plan (S)*

4 Q. One witness who was a U.S. Air Force pilot working  
5 at a high-level position, working in Laos in the 1967-68  
6 time frame, has testified in a deposition that he was  
7 involved in the proposal of a plan to rescue U.S. prisoners  
8 of war believed to be held in caves near Sam Neua during  
9 that two-year time period.

10 A. May I get this identity again? I know you're not  
11 going to give me the name of the individual -- or do you  
12 want to give it?

13 Q. Well, I'd rather not.

14 A. Are you suggesting this is a man who was flying, a  
15 pilot?

16 Q. I'm not sure. I can't remember exactly what his  
17 position was. I know he was flying missions.

18 A. And he was stationed in Laos?

19 Q. Yes. I'm going to tell you who it was because you  
20 may be aware of what his role was.

21 DATA



22  
23 Q. He was in Thailand?

24 A. He was in Thailand.

25 MR. HERGEN: Once again, your candor pays off.

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BY MR. KRAVITZ:

Q. He was involved in U.S. Air Force activities in  
Laos.

A. Right.

DATA

METHOD

Q. Let me ask you about that. DATA

whether it was he that proposed it or someone he was  
working with, his testimony was that there was a proposed

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1 plan to rescue U.S. prisoners believed to be held in caves  
2 near Sam Neua in 1967 or 1968, and that the plan was; I  
3 think in his word, nixed at the last minute by CIA  
4 headquarters, and that that information, that the plan had  
5 been nixed, was presented by you.

6 A. Presented by me to whom?

7 Q. DATA

8  
9 A. Oh.

10 Q. My question is whether you have any recollection  
11 of that.

12 A. No. I would have doubted -- I would assume my  
13 station chief would have presented that information to him.  
14 I think that's probably the plan that I'm referring to that  
15 I am rather convinced never got to my level. But it's  
16 possible. DATA

17  
18 Q. Wasn't the plan that you were talking about  
19 earlier at the other location?

20 A. Well, Xianghoang, Sam Neua. I didn't mean to be  
21 specific. It could be either one. But if he was talking  
22 about Sam Neua, yes. I say that sounds exactly, in the  
23 recesses of my memory, that sounds exactly like -- but if it  
24 was turned down by CIA headquarters, it would presumably  
25 mean that it had never gotten to me.