

Reel 1

EX 7A DOC 4

SUBJECT: PW/MIA Meeting

30 December 1980

REF : RADM J. O. Tuttle, Assistant Deputy Director for Defense Intelligence (DI) Phonecon 24 Dec 80; same subject, meeting 1300 hours, 30 Dec 80, Rm 2D921

1. RADM Tuttle's meeting was held as scheduled, 1300-1500, 30 Dec 80. Representatives from DIA (4), CIA (2) and NSA (4) attended. See Inclosure for attendees.

2. RADM Tuttle reviewed DIA photo and report chronology (Mar 79-Dec 80) on American PW facilities and sitings in Laos. RADM Tuttle has a strong suspicion that American POW's remain in Laos.

NSA representatives do not have to substantiate the case. Early December 80 case of 20 American POW's reported in , and not corroborated is typical. December 80 case is a fraud, and view American POW's in Laos as unlikely.

3.

Overhead photography of facility confirms prison like structures and fence. facility may hold prisoners, but that it is highly unlikely the prisoners are American.

4. DIA has a Vietnamese source (Le Ba Oanh) who has passed a polygraph examination, and claims to have been in a prison facility near Tay Ninh, Northwest of Ho Chi Minh City, which contained American POW's. The POW camp coordinates are 111911N 1062010E. Le Ba Oanh has drawn an accurate sketch of the facility (verified by overhead photography) which he claims to have visited as recently as August 80, when he observed American POW's. Le Ba Oanh will be interrogated by DIA for approximately 10 days starting on 7 Jan 81. The DIA analyst has detected discrepancies in the source's story, and items will be addressed during the interrogation period.

5. RADM Tuttle announced that in January 81, a PW/MIA interagency group is to be formed. The group composition will be: State Department, ISA, JCS/J-5, DIA and SEA sub-committee. Early in the meeting, RADM Tuttle stated he wanted a DIA and NSA chronology of PW/MIA events, however, the DIA action officer (P. Hurc) said the request needs further DIA definition before NSA inputs are required. The DIA request for NSA time line inputs will be through NCRDEF office.

6. The DIA analyst handling Le Ba Oanh's interrogation was requested to provide his initial report. If the report is releasable, the document will be via NCRDEF office.

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EX 7 Doc B
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DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

28 JAN 1981

S-9073/DI-7

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHAIRMAN, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

SUBJECT: Current U.S. Prisoner of War Intelligence

1. As you are aware, there are approximately 2,500 Americans unaccounted-for in Southeast Asia. Since 1975, DIA has received approximately 1,000 reports from Indochinese refugees concerning alleged sightings of Americans, crash locations, grave locations, and the handling and disposition of U.S. remains. Of these 1,000 reports, approximately 300 deal with the alleged first hand sighting of U.S. PWs detained in Southeast Asia.
2. Since April 1979, DIA has been investigating information provided by a refugee who alleged the detention of U.S. PWs in Laos. In November 1980, CIA provided information which corroborates the refugee's report. Overhead imagery has verified the existence of a detention facility at the alleged site. At enclosure is a chronological listing with tabs, which support the belief that U.S. PWs may be detained in Laos.
3. On 17 January 1981, DIA requested that CIA attempt to confirm the presence of U.S. PWs in Laos. The details of CIA intentions are contained in the enclosure. As the possibility exists that CIA could confirm these reports, I recommend that you consider preparing a contingency plan in the event this very important undertaking proves successful. To support this effort, I will request that CIA prepare a topographical model of the site and surrounding area.
4. As DIA is also investigating other reports alleging the detention of U.S. PWs in Southeast Asia, it is necessary that DIA (DI) remain the focal point for all intelligence activity relating to this matter. We will continue to obtain imagery of this facility and provide timely information to you concerning the progress of the CIA *MT*.

1 Enclosure
Chronological Listing

Eugene F. Tighe, Jr.
EUGENE F. TIGHE, JR.
Lieutenant General, USAF
Director

Exh. 7-B
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REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

CHRONOLOGICAL LISTING

SUBJECT: Nhommarath Detention Facility

1. On 17 April 1979, a Lao refugee wrote a letter to Gen Yang Pao in Montana which contained U.S. PW information. He indicated that 18 U.S. PWs and 25 Lao prisoners were detained in a cave near Muong Nhommarath, Khammouane Province (due east of NKP Thailand). The prisoners were reportedly moved to this location from northern Laos on 10 March 1979.
2. During subsequent DoD interviews (Oct 79 and Feb 80), the refugee reported that the above PWs, and a separate group consisting of two U.S. PWs, one Australian, and one Japanese were held in caves in the vicinity of Kham Keut, approximately 70 kms from Nhommarath. He provided a sketch of the detention area. One month after his initial DoD interview, the refugee reported to a Lao associate the detention of U.S. PWs at Muong Nhommarath.
3. Imagery from July 1979 indicated that a cave entrance is located approximately 500 meters from the location at which the two U.S. PWs, the Japanese and the Australian were reportedly detained. A cave entrance could not be located at the location at which the 18 U.S. PWs were reportedly detained. However, heavy foliage in that area offers the possibility that the cave entrance could exist but was obscured.
4. During September/October 1980, the refugee was re-interviewed and polygraphed. The examiner opined that he was reporting information which he believed to be accurate and that he had not conspired with any person to provide false information. The refugee identified the source of his PW information to be a Lao resistance fighter. Efforts to locate the resistance fighter are ongoing.
5. On 18 November 1980, CIA reported (TAB A) that it had received information concerning the alleged detention of 30 U.S. PWs at Muong Nhommarath. The information was received from a highly reliable Thai source who had received it from an untested Lao subsource. On 21 January 1981, CIA reported that the Lao sub-source advised that U.S. PWs had been moved from Nhommarath to Kontum, Vietnam. Additional information is being sought.
6. Imagery (TAB B) from 10 December 1980 indicates the presence of a detention facility at a location southeast of Muong Nhommarath. Imagery indicates this facility did not exist in April 1978 (TAB C) and was partially completed by September 1979 (TAB D). Further, examination of imagery from 10 and 30 December 1980, and 2 January 1981 reveals that the number "52" has been stamped in the dirt in the row crop area located between the camp inner and outer fencing, in a location not apparently observable from either of the two guard towers (TAB E). Imagery of 30 December 1980 indicates the presence of approximately 25 persons in the inner compound and imagery of 24 January 1981 indicates the presence of nine (9) probable persons, 4 in the inner compound and five in the outer compound (TAB F).

EX 7 B.3

REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

7. On 17 January 1981, DIA requested that CIA conduct an operation inside Laos in an attempt to verify the presence of U.S. PWs at this facility. CIA has agreed to undertake this operation, and is currently in the planning stage.

METHOD

- TAB A - CIA Memorandum dated 18 November 1980
- B - 10 December 1980 Imagery
- C - April 1978 Imagery
- D - September 1979 Imagery
- E - Various dated Imagery
- F - 24 January 1981 Imagery

EX 7C

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M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Bill

FROM: Bob T.

DATE: 5 December 1991

SUBJECT: Post 73/75 Military Operations - Don Gordon

1 On 5 December, I spoke by phone with Mr. Don Gordon, former J-2 (Intelligence Officer) for the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) in 1981. JSOC was then, and still is today, the joint (inter-service) command authority for special operations units such as Delta (Army) and Seal Team-Six (Navy). As the J-2 of JSOC, Mr. Gordon was involved in planning for the 1981 Nhom Marrot operation. He recounted the following:

2 In early 1981, around January, JSOC had been alerted to a possible rescue attempt in Laos for American POWs and had formed a small team to begin planning. It was obvious that the higher levels in the Pentagon had sensitive intelligence and that they wanted time to evaluate it. He recalled that at some point they obtained overhead photography of the suspect camp, showing what was interpreted to be a "52" stomped into the grass nearby. He recalled this created speculation that this might be a signal from POWs, perhaps associated with the POW tap code, a Rivet Joint collection aircraft that was lost in Laos, or a B-52 crew. They also had conflicting intelligence that this might be a Vietnamese Army camp.

3 By April, the Pacific Command was actively involved in planning and a 10-15 man PACOM planning team was working with JSOC. Gordon also recalled a special KH satellite mission being tasked to collect on the suspect camp. A scale model of the camp was constructed at the Navy Yard and brought down to Fort Bragg where a "facsimile" model was made. He specifically recalled that overhead photography could make out what was written on a large sign over the entrance of the camp. He thought it said something in Laotian like "Through your labors, you will be free."

4 Gordon remembered that an interagency meeting was held in April JSOC, JCS, CIA, and NSA attended. The commander of JSOC, told his CIA he "wanted round eyes to look at was mounted. Gordon could not

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remember the CIA official, but said he was high...

Exh. 7-C

5 In fact, General Scholts had first argued that Delta should perform the recon. However, when CIA insisted it had jurisdiction over the recon, and that it be done with non-U.S. personnel, Scholts demanded that the team have at least one American. CIA agreed they would have an American accompany the team. Gordon recalled it was a Marine Corp officer working for the Agency, although he did not have his name. As far as he knows, he led the team but cannot confirm it. CIA left the meeting saying it would take 6-8 weeks to prepare for the mission.

6 Gordon described the CIA run mission as ineptly organized and ill-equipped. He recalls that they were equipped with a World-War II era radio. He stated they had no Direction Finding (DF) equipment.

7 He thought the mission was over by June, but received little feed-back on the results. He learned they had observed the camp for two hours, or two days, depending on "who you talk to" and took photographs, which reportedly contained no indication of Americans. When he asked to see the pictures, he said he was refused. He said the operation essentially ended there, and remembered being surprised at how fast interest dropped.

8 Gordon also provided a number of names of individuals involved in various aspects of the 1981 operation. We will pursue those leads, especially General Scholts and other participants of the April interagency meeting.

To: Bob Taylor
Subject: MFR on Interview of Larry Waters

----- Message Contents -----

MFR: On 20 July 1992, I conducted a taped interview of Larry Waters, former CIA case officer in Bangkok, 1978 - 82. I had arranged to have him come in regarding his involvement with the Nhom Marrot operation of 1981. Mr. Waters was the officer in charge of renning the CIA recon team and was involved in the team debrief, when it returned.

To summarize, Mr. Waters said he did not recall the team bringing back evidence to support the presence of POWs at the camp. He could "not recall" when asked, the cable sent from Bangkok station to HQs, saying that two members of the team said they saw one, repeat one possible caucasian, & thought they had photographed him, but could not find the photo after it was developed. He could not recall nor explain the cables existence at CIA HQs.

His interview tape is on file at Senate Security.

R. Taylor 21/7/92

Exh 7D