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THE WHITE HOUSE
CORRESPONDENCE TRACKING WORKSHEET

CO 084

INCOMING

DATE RECEIVED: SEPTEMBER 11, 1987

8726668

NAME OF CORRESPONDENT: THE HONORABLE LOUISE M. SLAUGHTER

SUBJECT: FORWARDS LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT FROM SILONE
PHOMMANIRAT, LAO DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE,
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK REGARDING THE STRUGGLE
FOR DEMOCRACY IN LAOS

ROUTE TO: OFFICE/AGENCY (STAFF NAME)	ACTION		DISPOSITION	
	ACT CODE	DATE YY/MM/DD	TYPE RESP	C COMPLETED D YY/MM/DD
WILLIAM BALL	ORG	87/09/11	WB	A 87/09/14
CON/199 ✓ REFERRAL NOTE: _____	A	87/09/15		C 87/10/07
State ✓ REFERRAL NOTE: _____	R	87/09/19	TR	A 87/10/05
REFERRAL NOTE: _____				
W Ball REFERRAL NOTE: _____	A	87/10/07		C 87/11/08
REFERRAL NOTE: _____				
REFERRAL NOTE: _____				

COMMENTS: _____

ADDITIONAL CORRESPONDENTS: MEDIA:L INDIVIDUAL CODES: 1230 _____
MAIL USER CODES: (A) _____ (B) _____ (C) _____

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| *ACTION CODES: | *DISPOSITION | *OUTGOING | * |
| * | * | *CORRESPONDENCE: | * |
| *A-APPROPRIATE ACTION | *A-ANSWERED | *TYPE RESP=INITIALS | * |
| *C-COMMENT/RECOM | *B-NON-SPEC-REFERRAL | * OF SIGNER | * |
| *D-DRAFT RESPONSE | *C-COMPLETED | * CODE = A | * |
| *F-FURNISH FACT SHEET | *S-SUSPENDED | *COMPLETED = DATE OF | * |
| *I-INFO COPY/NO ACT NEC* | | * OUTGOING | * |
| *R-DIRECT REPLY W/COPY * | | | * |
| *S-FOR-SIGNATURE * | | | * |
| *X-INTERIM REPLY * | | | * |
- *****

REFER QUESTIONS AND ROUTING UPDATES TO CENTRAL REFERENCE
(ROOM 75, OEOB) EXT-2590
KEEP THIS WORKSHEET ATTACHED TO THE ORIGINAL INCOMING
LETTER AT ALL TIMES AND SEND COMPLETED RECORD TO RECORDS
MANAGEMENT.

UNCLASSIFIED

(CLASSIFICATION)

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT
TRANSMITTAL FORM

S/S 8726668

DATE October 6, 1987

FOR: MR. GRANT GREEN
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
THE WHITE HOUSE

REFERENCE:

TO: President Reagan FROM: Cong. Louise Slaughter

DATE: Sept. 9, 1987 SUBJECT: Lao Democratic People
and their struggle

REFERRAL DATED: 9/18/87 ID# 0513737
(IF ANY)

_____ THE ATTACHED ITEM WAS SENT DIRECTLY TO THE
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ACTION TAKEN:

_____ A DRAFT REPLY IS ATTACHED.

_____ A DRAFT REPLY WILL BE FORWARDED.

_____ A TRANSLATION IS ATTACHED.

X AN INFORMATION COPY OF A DIRECT REPLY IS ATTACHED.

_____ WE BELIEVE NO RESPONSE IS NECESSARY FOR THE REASON
CITED BELOW.

_____ THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE HAS NO OBJECTION TO THE
PROPOSED TRAVEL.

_____ OTHER (SEE REMARKS).

REMARKS:


DIRECTOR
SECRETARIAT STAFF

UNCLASSIFIED
(CLASSIFICATION)

S/S

OCT 5 1987

Dear Ms. Slaughter:

Thank you for your letter of September 9 in which you forwarded to President Reagan a request for US support from a constituent, Mr. Silone Phommanirat of Rochester. The White House has asked the Department of State to reply.

While we appreciate your constituent's concern for his homeland, the United States does not give support or assistance to any organization which is attempting to overthrow the current government of Laos. The United States maintains normal diplomatic relations with that government. At the same time, we will continue to encourage the government in Vientiane, as we urge all governments, to extend to their citizens basic democratic freedoms to which we believe all human beings are entitled.

I hope the above information allows you to respond to your constituent.

Sincerely,

EHS

J. Edward Fox
Assistant Secretary
Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs

Enclosure:

Correspondence returned

The Honorable
Louise M. Slaughter,
House of Representatives.

Drafted: EAP/VLC:AMKolankiewicz
9/23/87;647-3133;W-8651A
CLEARED: EAP/VLC:SCLowman
EAP:Staff Asst
H:SKrebs
Control No. S/S 8726668

Drafted: EAP/VLC:AMKolankiewicz *AMK*
9/23/87;647-3133;W-8651A
CLEARED: EAP/VLC:SCLowman *W*
EAP:Staff Asst
Control No. S/S 8726668

H. L. Russell Jr

8726668

T H E W H I T E H O U S E O F F I C E

REFERRAL

SEPTEMBER 18, 1987

TO: DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ACTION REQUESTED:

DIRECT REPLY, FURNISH INFO COPY

DESCRIPTION OF INCOMING:

ID: 513737

MEDIA: LETTER, DATED SEPTEMBER 9, 1987

TO: PRESIDENT REAGAN

FROM: THE HONORABLE LOUISE M. SLAUGHTER
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

WASHINGTON DC 20515

SUBJECT: FORWARDS LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT FROM SILONE
PHOMMANIRAT, LAO DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE,
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK REGARDING THE STRUGGLE
FOR DEMOCRACY IN LAOS

PROMPT ACTION IS ESSENTIAL -- IF REQUIRED ACTION HAS NOT BEEN
TAKEN WITHIN 9 WORKING DAYS OF RECEIPT, PLEASE TELEPHONE THE
UNDERSIGNED AT 456-7486.

RETURN CORRESPONDENCE, WORKSHEET AND COPY OF RESPONSE
(OR DRAFT) TO:
AGENCY LIAISON, ROOM 91, THE WHITE HOUSE, 20500

SALLY KELLEY
DIRECTOR OF AGENCY LIAISON
PRESIDENTIAL CORRESPONDENCE

September 14, 1987

Dear Mrs. Slaughter:

Thank you for your September 9 letter forwarding to the President a letter from Silone Phommanirat.

In an effort to be of assistance, I have forwarded Mr. Phommanirat's letter to the appropriate White House officials to see if a response may be sent to him in the President's behalf. Your interest in writing is appreciated.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

William L. Ball, III
Assistant to the President

The Honorable Louise M. Slaughter
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

WLB/KRJ/HLB/hlb

cc: w/copy of inc, Anne Higgins -- for
DIRECT action

WH RECORDS MANAGEMENT WILL RETAIN ORIGINAL
INCOMING

8
WHIP-AT-LARGE
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS &
TRANSPORTATION
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT
OPERATIONS
SELECT COMMITTEE ON AGING

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

LOUISE M. SLAUGHTER
30TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

513737

1313 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

DISTRICT OFFICES:
311 FEDERAL BUILDING
100 STATE STREET
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK 14614
716/232-4850
216 EAST MAIN STREET
BATAVIA, NEW YORK 14020
716/343-2524

September 9, 1987

WBS

President Ronald Reagan
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

One of my constituents has asked me to forward the
enclosed letter to you for your response.

I would appreciate any help you can offer Mr.
Phommanirat.

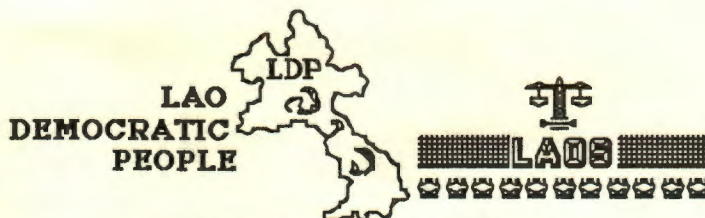
Sincerely,

Louise

Louise M. Slaughter
Member of Congress

LMS/hre

Enclosure



Silone Phommanirat
108 Edgeland Street
Rochester, New York 14609
Phone: (716) 288 5972
or
(716) 275 4181

President Ronald Reagan
The United States Of America
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

August 31, 1987

Dear President Reagan:

My name is Silone Phommanirat. I am a naturalized American citizen living in Rochester, New York but I was born in Laos. Since 1972 when I was fourteen years old I volunteered to join the United States Forces in their help prevents the Pathet Lao Communist movements. For the next three years I fought within Laos with my colleagues to prevent the Pathet Lao Communist from the taking over. Tragically we failed and in 1974 I went to Thailand, since then, and from there commanded guerillas who infiltrated Laos in an effort to dislodge the Pathet Lao were influenced by North Vietnamese, but did not success. The reasons, we are lacking financial support. For five years my group and I fought underground against the Communists ascendancy. Finally in 1979 I entered to the United States. Though I like the United States, and I am still committed to bringing freedom to Laos.

I propose that the United States a government support for a program, which we are namely the **Lao Democratic People(LDP)**, which is still remaining fights against the Red Communists in Laos. Washington, D.C. must help by the following steps: First please help my soldiers to United States or elsewhere for training by the mankind of the United States Army. Second please supply adequate military equipments to them when finished a program, and return to Laos. Third furnish medical care and financial support for our Anti-Communist soldiers.

I am in contacting with many a good Laotians who have displaced and come to the United States. They view me not only justify, but the leader of democratic party and I certain evidence of varying predispositions among the Pathet Lao Communist Party. I am deeply embeded in helping them to regain a nation, and political purpose control over Laos. Can you help and support us in this struggle for democracy?

Very respectfully yours,

Silone Phommanirat
Leader of the Lao Democratic People

4.

THE WHITE HOUSE
CORRESPONDENCE TRACKING WORKSHEET

0084

INCOMING

DATE RECEIVED: FEBRUARY 16, 1988

FEB 17 1988

NAME OF CORRESPONDENT: THE HONORABLE MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH

SUBJECT: ENCLOSSES SEP 87 REPORT BY THE HERITAGE
FOUNDATION RAISING THE ISSUE OF AMERICANS
STILL BEING HELD CAPTIVE IN LAOS, CAMBODIA
AND POSSIBLY VIETNAM

ROUTE TO: OFFICE/AGENCY (STAFF NAME)	ACTION		DISPOSITION	
	ACT CODE	DATE YY/MM/DD	TYPE RESP	C COMPLETED D YY/MM/DD
CRISTY BACH	ORG	88/02/16	CB	A 88/3/8
99-DOD				
REFERRAL NOTE:				
	R	88/03/11	TR	A 88/10/10
REFERRAL NOTE:				
REFERRAL NOTE:				
REFERRAL NOTE:				
REFERRAL NOTE:				

TR

PH

COMMENTS: IGA - Betty Karabatsos TR

ADDITIONAL CORRESPONDENTS: MEDIA:L INDIVIDUAL CODES: 2300

IA MAIL USER CODES: (A) (B) (C)

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| *ACTION CODES: | *DISPOSITION | *OUTGOING | * |
| * | * | *CORRESPONDENCE: | * |
| *A-APPROPRIATE ACTION | *A-ANSWERED | *TYPE RESP=INITIALS | * |
| *C-COMMENT/RECOM | *B-NON-SPEC-REFERRAL | * OF SIGNER | * |
| *D-DRAFT RESPONSE | *C-COMPLETED | * CODE = A | * |
| *F-FURNISH FACT SHEET | *S-SUSPENDED | *COMPLETED = DATE OF | * |
| *I-INFO COPY/NO ACT NEC* | | * OUTGOING | * |
| *R-DIRECT REPLY W/COPY * | | | * |
| *S-FOR-SIGNATURE | | | * |
| *X-INTERIM REPLY | | | * |
- *****

REFER QUESTIONS AND ROUTING UPDATES TO CENTRAL REFERENCE
(ROOM 75, OEOB) EXT-2590
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LETTER AT ALL TIMES AND SEND COMPLETED RECORD TO RECORDS
MANAGEMENT.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE CORRESPONDENCE ACTION REPORT

This form must be completed and delivered to the Correspondence Control Division (CCD), WHS, Room 3A948, not later than (YYMMDD) **8 APR 88**

1. DATE (YYMMDD)

31 MAR 88

2. ACTION TAKEN (X one)

- a. ACTION HAS BEEN COMPLETED (Copy attached)
- b. REQUEST CANCELLATION / EXTENSION OF SUSPENSE DATE TO
- c. INTERIM REPLY HAS BEEN SENT (Copy attached)

3. JUSTIFICATION

This action was completed by the NISC the letter writer sent out form letters to various agencies. Copy attached

4. REPORTING AGENCY

a. ACTION AGENCY
ISA/EAPR

b. NAME OF ACTION OFFICER
Cosmo

5. CCD CONTROL NUMBER
88/10224

1419958

TELEPHONE NO.
57005

d. DATE (YYMMDD)
880601

6. ACTION TAKEN (For Correspondence Control Division Use Only)

- a. EXTENSION / CANCELLATION
- b. OTHER (Specify)

e. APPROVING MILITARY / EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT (Service Secretary / Under Secretary / ASD Level)

Date Signed

Approved

Disapproved

Previous editions are obsolete.

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20508

April 5, 1988

Dear Mr. Antonovich:

Both the President and Vice President have reviewed the Heritage Lecture on POW/MIA that you provided and appreciate your continued interest and support of our efforts to resolve this issue.

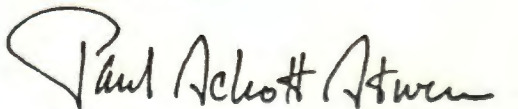
Mr. Sauvageot's presentation appears to be an accurate portrayal of the dynamics of the regime.

Unfortunately, the presentation by Mr. McDaniel is inaccurate. He has been severely critical of our efforts on POW/MIA, but his facts are wrong. He mentions satellite photography that purports to indicate the presence of U.S. prisoners, but this "well-advertised" information to which he refers was checked out thoroughly six years ago. It did not confirm the presence of POWs.

Captain McDaniel relates an interview by Soviet correspondents in his office to the return of his former navigator's ID card two weeks later. He also cites a study that seems to show that Air Force pilots come home in greater numbers than specialists whose skills the Vietnamese could use. In fact, studies on this question show pilots and technical aircrewmembers came home in an almost even ratio. On the navigator's ID card, it is hard to conclude anything. However, it has been rather common to receive personal effects or identification without the remains of the original bearer and this particular case had been raised with the Vietnamese on numerous occasions prior to the turnover of the ID card.

Enclosed is some additional information that we hope will be helpful. Again, our sincere thanks for your continued concern about this national tragedy.

Sincerely,



Paul Schott Stevens
Executive Secretary

Enclosures

cc: T. Kenneth Cribb, Jr.

Mr. Michael D. Antonovich
Supervisor, Fifth District
Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
Room 869, Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

88 MAR 11 PM 2:42

OSD
WHITE HOUSE LIAISON

T H E W H I T E H O U S E O F F I C E

REFERRAL

MARCH 11, 1988

TO: DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
ATTN: IGA, BETTY KARABOTSOS

ACTION REQUESTED:
DIRECT REPLY, FURNISH INFO COPY

DESCRIPTION OF INCOMING:

ID: 543244
MEDIA: LETTER, DATED FEBRUARY 4, 1988
TO: PRESIDENT REAGAN
FROM: THE HONORABLE MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH
SUPERVISOR
FIFTH DISTRICT
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
HALL OF ADMINISTRATION, RM. 869
500 WEST TEMPLE STREET
LOS ANGELES CA 90012

SUBJECT: ENCLOSURES SEP 87 REPORT BY THE HERITAGE
FOUNDATION RAISING THE ISSUE OF AMERICANS
STILL BEING HELD CAPTIVE IN LAOS, CAMBODIA
AND POSSIBLY VIETNAM

PROMPT ACTION IS ESSENTIAL -- IF REQUIRED ACTION HAS NOT BEEN
TAKEN WITHIN 9 WORKING DAYS OF RECEIPT, PLEASE TELEPHONE THE
UNDERSIGNED AT 456-7486.

RETURN CORRESPONDENCE, WORKSHEET AND COPY OF RESPONSE
(OR DRAFT) TO:
AGENCY LIAISON, ROOM 91, THE WHITE HOUSE, 20500

SALLY KELLEY
DIRECTOR OF AGENCY LIAISON
PRESIDENTIAL CORRESPONDENCE

W19958

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

March 8, 1988

Mike
Dear Mr. Antonovich:

On behalf of the President, I would like to thank you for your letter regarding the Heritage Foundation's report on MIA/POWs.

Please be assured that the President appreciates the sensitivity and urgency of the MIA/POW issue and is working with the Department of Defense to answer all questions involved in this important issue. Therefore, I have forwarded a copy of your letter to Ms. Elizabeth Karabatsos, Director of the Intergovernmental Affairs Office at the Department of Defense, for her direct reply. You should be hearing from her shortly. I have also requested that she copy me on her response to you.

Again, thank you for writing and for sharing your concern with the President.

Sincerely,

Cristy

Cristena L. Bach
Special Assistant to the President
for Intergovernmental Affairs

Frank Donatelli received your letter on this subject, tn. state will respond for both. Hope all is well!

Mr. Michael D. Antonovich
County Supervisor
Hall of Administration
Room 869
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

543244

Board of Supervisors County of Los Angeles



MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH
SUPERVISOR FIFTH DISTRICT

February 4, 1988

c. Back
The President Ronald Reagan
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The enclosed September 1987 report by the Heritage Foundation raised the issue of Americans still being held captive in Laos, Cambodia and possibly Vietnam. On page 5 of the report, Captain Eugene McDaniel, who had been a POW in Hanoi for six years and was later the Navy-Marine Corps liaison on Capitol Hill, explains how he became convinced in 1981 that American POWs are still being held in Southeast Asia. Captain McDaniel was shown a satellite photograph of a jungle camp in Laos. The number "52" appeared in the camp for six weeks and then disappeared. It was clear to Captain McDaniel that this was a signal from American prisoners.

On page 14, Captain McDaniel tells another story to indicate the likely presence of American POWs. In 1980 he was interviewed by correspondents from Pravda and TASS. As they were leaving, they mentioned that the interview would appear in Pravda and they raised the issue of POW-MIAs. Two weeks after their visit, the ID card of Captain McDaniel's navigator in Vietnam was returned by Vietnam. (Although the navigator was known to be alive on the ground for four days in Vietnam after his plane was shot down, he had not been returned with our other POWs in 1973, nor had he been accounted for.) The Defense Intelligence Agency dismissed the return of the navigator's ID card as a coincidence.

According to a Rand Corporation study, Air Force pilots came home from captivity in much larger numbers than specialists, such as navigators, radar observers, and electronic warfare officers. It has been suggested that North Vietnam kept these men to help maintain and operate sophisticated equipment.

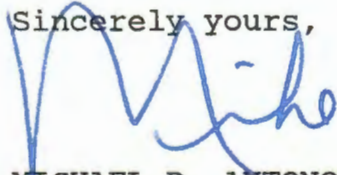
President Ronald Reagan
Page Two
February 4, 1988

On page 13, Captain McDaniel suggests a face-saving way for the North Vietnamese to retrieve American POWs from Cambodia and Laos. Under this plan the United States government would pay Hanoi to "search" Cambodia and Laos for our prisoners and return them to us.

March 31st is the Fifteenth Anniversary of the return of the final group of American POWs who were released. We ought to make it a high level priority to celebrate that anniversary by taking whatever measures are necessary to ensure the return of all our American POWs and a final accounting of all the MIAs.

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely yours,



MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH
Supervisor, Fifth District

MDA:TS:gs

Enclosures

*Tom -
This is an excellent
report by the Heritage Foundation -
Hope you can assist -*

THE U.S. AND VIETNAM: TWELVE YEARS AFTER THE WAR

**Edited by
Kenneth Conboy**

**Colonel Andre Sauvageot (U.S. Army, ret.)
Member, U.S. Government Delegations to Vietnam**

**Captain Eugene McDaniel (U.S. Navy, ret.)
Former POW, President of American Defense Institute**

**Professor Andre Van Chau
Former Professor, University of Saigon**

**Kenneth Conboy
Indochina Policy Analyst, The Heritage Foundation**

**Martin L. Lasater
Director, Asian Studies Center, The Heritage Foundation**

**Sponsored by The Asian Studies Center
The Heritage Foundation
September 2, 1987**

The U.S. and Vietnam: Twelve Years After the War

Martin L. Lasater, Director, Heritage Foundation's Asian Studies Center

Today we are addressing a very sensitive subject, the question of future U.S. relations with Vietnam. I think everyone in this room has been touched by the long U.S. military involvement in Indochina. We lost friends, relatives, husbands, and sons in that bitter struggle. It has now been twelve years since the fall of Saigon, but the agony of Americans and Vietnamese continues.

Stung by its defeat in Vietnam, the United States largely withdrew from Southeast Asia in 1975, but Hanoi's invasion of Cambodia in 1978 and the concerns of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), refocused U.S. attention on Vietnam and its intentions in the region. Subsequently, the United States joined ASEAN, China, and the majority of Western nations to impose an economic aid blockade on Hanoi.

Two years later, with the advent of the Reagan Administration, another dimension to U.S.-Vietnam relations was added when the POW-MIA (prisoner of war-missing in action) issue was reemphasized, and an accurate accounting of U.S. servicemen missing in action became the major stumbling block to a normalization of relations. In fact, most of the contact between the United States and Vietnam during the Reagan Administration has been devoted to trying to resolve the complicated POW-MIA issue.

Today, there are some hints of change in U.S.-Vietnam relations. In the last eight months, two pieces of legislation have been proposed in Congress, one calling for the establishment of a U.S. Technical Office in Hanoi, and the second, for a large increase in the number of visas given to Vietnamese officials who want to come to the United States. And two months ago, General John Vessey, President Reagan's Special Envoy to Vietnam, visited Hanoi to discuss POWs and humanitarian issues.

At the same time that this increased contact has occurred between the U.S. and Vietnamese officials, the aid embargo that we helped establish against Vietnam following its invasion of Cambodia, has been slowly breaking down. Partly because of this, Washington is approaching an important crossroads in its relations with Hanoi. There are several possible policy courses open to the U.S. One option would be to stay the current course, moving very slowly toward normalization, but running the risk of having our leverage over Vietnam gradually erode because of the deteriorating aid and trade embargo.

The U.S. also could implement a stricter policy that would do more to enforce the aid embargo, while offering no concessions at all to Vietnam until it showed major movement on the Cambodian issue and insured an accurate accounting of Americans missing in action.

A third option would be to seek improved relations that would put the Vietnam War behind us. This might open up new avenues for settling the POW

issue, but it would run the risk of accepting Vietnamese domination over all of Indochina, including the continuation of its occupation of Cambodia.

The purpose of this seminar is to consider the wide-ranging implications of these various policy options. We will examine international aspects of the problem, looking at the effect of U.S.-Vietnam relations on our allies in ASEAN and on the Soviet-China-U.S. equation in the Asia Pacific region.

We also will look at the domestic aspects of the issue, specifically the impact of improved U.S.-Vietnam relations on the POW-MIA issue in the United States. This, of course, includes the humanitarian concerns in U.S.-Vietnam relations, involving the tens of thousands of political prisoners and church followers who have suffered under the Hanoi regime.

Finally, we will examine some of the implications for Vietnam itself. Vietnam is going through a series of potentially significant political and economic changes, and there are indications that Hanoi may be considering breaking out of its political isolation and improving its economic situation through a more pragmatic policy. If change were to occur, it could have far-reaching implications for the U.S. attitude toward Vietnam.

Our first speaker is Colonel Andre Sauvageot, U.S. Army, Retired, and a member of several U.S. government delegations to Vietnam. He will discuss the international setting of U.S.-Vietnam relations. Colonel Sauvageot.

Colonel Andre Sauvageot

It is worth considering briefly why the U.S. became involved in Vietnam in the first place. The reason, of course, was that we wanted to stop the spread of communism in Southeast Asia, at that time supported by both the Soviet Union and China. While the relationship between many of the parties to that first equation--the Vietnamese communists, the Chinese communists, and the Soviets--has changed very dramatically, one constant remains in this international setting: a continuance of Soviet imperialism in East Asia and the Pacific.

Despite the unthreatening face assumed by General Secretary Gorbachev during his 1986 Vladivostok speech, Soviet strategy has not changed. Figures show that the Soviets now have some 162 mobile intermediate-range ballistic missiles and 25 percent of the total Soviet military aircraft in the Far East strategic theater. The Soviet Union's Pacific fleet is a major striking force, and it is being strengthened at a fast pace under Gorbachev.

Vietnam has emerged as the major Soviet proxy in Asia. Hanoi has not always had so close a relationship with Moscow. In fact, although the Soviet Union contributed the most to Hanoi's victory in the South, Vietnam's immediately postwar relationship with its superpower supporter was strained. Hanoi initially refused both Soviet and Chinese requests to open consular offices in Ho Chi Minh City but allowed the French to keep theirs. And Vietnam also invited France, Norway, Japan, and other countries to initiate projects in the South. Meanwhile, Soviet aid projects faltered, as Hanoi stressed independence at the expense of "socialist

solidarity." Soviet military assistance at that time may have dropped to as low as \$20 million a year.

But whatever Vietnam's problems were with the Soviets, their problems with the Chinese were much greater. There were a number of communist Vietnamese efforts to patch up the relationship with China. Specifically, the Vietnamese were trying to separate China from the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia. After the Vietnamese failed to make any headway with Mao's China, they hoped that they would be able to achieve better results with Deng Xiaoping. Because of his reputation as a pragmatist, Vietnam believed that Deng would back away from the Khmer Rouge. It turned out, however, that Deng's geopolitical pragmatism entailed the continuation of support for the Cambodians against the Vietnamese. Once apprised of this, Vietnam patched up its relationship with the Soviets and mounted the military campaign to overturn the Khmer Rouge government.

Hanoi's relationship with the United States, of course, never has loomed as important as its ties with the Soviet Union or China. Vietnam made a very large mistake early on by requesting war reparations. While having played the antiwar movement quite skillfully during the war, the Vietnamese were slow to catch on to how much the political mainstream in the United States had changed after 1975.

Later Hanoi demanded only that the U.S. government honor the commitment that Nixon made for reconstruction aid; of course, that aid was predicated on their observing the Paris agreement. By the time they woke up to that fact and became willing to have diplomatic relations without any preconditions, the United States had already become involved in the normalization talks with China, and the Carter Administration decided that continuing to talk to Vietnam would derail talks with China. Subsequent to that, the Vietnamese signed the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with the Soviet Union. This was followed by the Soviet-supported military occupation of Cambodia, which is the root cause of the problem today.

ASEAN has tried very energetically to find a diplomatic solution to the occupation of Cambodia. They started lobbying early for the United Nations to continue recognition of Democratic Kampuchea, not because of approval of the Khmer Rouge record, but simply to establish the principle that ASEAN does not support a powerful state intervening in the affairs of a weaker state. ASEAN also spelled out its terms for a cease-fire agreement by all parties in Cambodia, in the shortest time possible, under the supervision and verification of a peacekeeping observer force, along with arrangements to insure that armed Cambodian elements would not disrupt free elections.

ASEAN has shown flexibility on the Cambodian problem. They have been instrumental in getting the Sihanouk forces, Son Sann forces, and Khmer Rouge to form a coalition in order to work more effectively toward a political settlement.

All of the parties to this equation continue to suffer different perils and to derive different benefits from the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia. ASEAN has emerged a cohesive group of countries that are able to cooperate politically. The United States also has been able to regain some of its influence in Southeast Asia, which had seemed so badly tarnished at the end of the war.

At the same time, the Soviet Union has achieved a foothold in Cam Ranh Bay and Da Nang. From their air bases in Vietnam, the Soviets can overfly the Philippines and the U.S. fleet in the Pacific and the Gulf of Thailand. But the Soviets have a conflict of interest with the Vietnamese over their occupation of Cambodia. While Moscow is trying to establish a warmer relationship with the ASEAN countries at the expense of the U.S., ASEAN concerns with getting the Vietnamese out of Cambodia militate directly against this. Soviet efforts to improve their relationship with China, in turn, make the Vietnamese fearful that this will be done at their expense. The Soviets also would like to have more direct influence in Cambodia and Laos than the Vietnamese want them to have. Lastly, Vietnam has proved to be quite an economic drain for the USSR.

Gorbachev apparently is trying to figure out a way to eat his cake and have it too: that is, to give Vietnam enough support to maintain Soviet access to Cam Ranh Bay and Da Nang Air Base, and at the same time to encourage the Vietnamese to cooperate in a rapprochement with China and get the international community to accept the status quo in Cambodia.

As a possible solution to this dilemma, the Vietnamese continue to talk about getting out of Cambodia by 1990. Hanoi first announced this deadline in 1985. And in 1990, I think we may see a dramatic reduction in the Vietnamese force, down from 140,000 to perhaps 50,000. They would be attempting to create a situation analagous to what they now have in Laos.

In short, the basic international setting is unchanged: the Soviets are trying to maintain control at Cam Ranh Bay; the Vietnamese are trying to preserve their grip over Cambodia; and the ASEAN countries and the United States are determined that Hanoi must get out.

Mr. Lasater: Captain Eugene McDaniel is going to discuss the emotional POW-MIA issue. Captain McDaniel is a retired U.S. Navy pilot and himself a former POW. Currently, he is President of the American Defense Institute. Captain McDaniel.

Captain Eugene McDaniel

The POW-MIA accountability problem is clearly a major factor in U.S.-Vietnam relations. As of today, 2,413 men from the U.S. are missing in Southeast Asia.

I was shot down May 19, 1967, captured May 21st, and taken two days later to Hanoi where I spent six years. I was moved a total of seventeen times within five different locations. During my six years in Hanoi, I never doubted that some day all of us prisoners would be going home and, after long years of negotiations in Paris, we were released in four different groups. The first group came out February 12, 1973, the last on March 31, 1973. Five hundred and ninety-one men in all came home.

For my first eleven years back I felt very strongly that we all had come back from Vietnam. But I spoke only for North Vietnam, where I spent my six years. I

could not speak for Laos, Cambodia, or South Vietnam, because I had never been there. Over the last three years, however, I have become absolutely convinced that there are large numbers of men still in captivity in Southeast Asia. During my tour as Navy-Marine Corps liaison on Capitol Hill, I used to take members of Congress out to the Pentagon for briefings after the boat people started coming out of Vietnam. And from the boat people, we have received accounts of the sightings of hundreds of live Caucasians in Southeast Asia in a classic POW scenario.

In 1981 I was further convinced of the existence of more POWs in Southeast Asia when I saw a satellite photograph that was taken of a jungle camp in Laos. The number 52 appeared in the camp for six weeks, then faded into oblivion. At the time that photograph was taken, there were 52 U.S. hostages in Iran; it could have also been a B-52 crew that was lost in Southeast Asia or a reference to Site 52, which was overrun in Laos. No one knew what the number meant, but when I saw that photograph, I knew it was Yankee ingenuity, not Vietnamese logic. There was a message in those numbers, and later in 1981 we launched a mission into Nhommarat, Laos, to take photographs; the mission was aborted because it ran into opposition and came out with no photographs.

After that, I became more involved, and over the next two or three years, I found out that, in the country of Laos, we lost 569 airmen in thirteen years of bombing; but not one of the 569 that were missing in Laos ever came home. I checked further. Over North Vietnam, where I flew my 81 missions, 39 percent of the more than 1,300 crews that were shot down had survived. In Laos, we had similar aircraft, similar guns, similar terrain. Logic tells me a like percentage would have survived in Laos.

I believe the Vietnamese withheld prisoners from Laos and Cambodia, kept them behind, as they had in previous wars. In Korea, 389 known prisoners were left behind. In World War II, the communists kept behind 10,000 Germans whom they released in 1955, ten years after the end of the war, including one American, John Nobles, who came home after eight years of captivity in the Soviet Union. Historically, the enemy has done that at the end of every war; they have kept people behind. So why not Vietnam?

I believe they gave us a list in Paris, minus the prisoners from Laos and Cambodia. The U.S. did not give them \$3.25 billion in war reparations, so they withheld the prisoners.

Today the U.S. government operates as if POWs are there, but there is no proof. In 1976, under President Carter, the POW issue was a factor because a Vietnamese mortician testified in a closed session of Congress under a cloak of secrecy that he had embalmed 400 American bodies that were then warehoused in Hanoi to be released when it was expedient for the Vietnamese to so do. To date, the U.S. has retrieved 150 of the 400 that they warehoused many years ago.

In 1976, the Montgomery Commission, headed by Congressman Sonny Montgomery, the Mississippi Democrat, was appointed by Carter to go to Hanoi. When they came back, they declared all the prisoners of war dead in Vietnam. In 1977, the Woodcock Commission, headed by Leonard Woodcock, traveled to

Vietnam at the request of President Carter, and they confirmed what the Montgomery Commission had declared in 1976.

Carter then declared that all the men that were missing had been killed in action on a presumptive finding of death, except one man, Colonel Charles Shelton, who was shot down April 29, 1965. He is still carried as a prisoner of war today.

In 1977-1979, the boat people began streaming out of Vietnam, hoping for freedom, telling hundreds of stories of American POWs in communist captivity. The official government position remained that all POWs were dead.

In July of 1981, Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, Lieutenant General Eugene Tighe testified before a congressional committee that POWs remained alive in Indochina. In the fall of 1981, President Reagan declared the POW issue a matter of highest national priority, and the government classified all live sightings. The U.S. government now operates under the assumption that prisoners of war remain in Southeast Asia.

From 1981 to 1983 there were secret American initiatives to offer medical supplies for prisoners of war. Former Republican Congressman Billy Hendon of North Carolina made eight trips to Southeast Asia dealing with the enemy as an emissary of this government. Medical supplies were flown to Laos in defiance of a congressional aid ban; the initiative was shut down in February 1983 when it became public.

In December 1984, convicted collaborator Private Robert Garwood told of seeing captive Americans in Vietnam. He had come out in 1979. The Administration acknowledged an overwhelming body of evidence strongly supporting the notion that POWs are still held.

In June 1985, retired DIA General Eugene Tighe testified that Hanoi was holding 50 to 60 Americans and called for a presidential commission and formal diplomatic ties with Hanoi to resolve the issue.

In October 15, 1985, National Security Council Advisor Robert McFarlane was quoted in *The Wall Street Journal* as saying that POWs remained in Southeast Asia. A National Security Council spokesman said McFarlane's remarks were off the record and did not reflect official U.S. government policy.

In October 23, 1985, in the face of mounting evidence, Congressman Sonny Montgomery who had headed the Commission in 1976, and Congressman Billy Hendon called for the formation of a presidential commission to reopen the prisoner of war issue.

In September 30, 1986, a Pentagon panel headed by Lieutenant General Eugene Tighe went back to investigate live sightings. The panel concluded that there are Americans in Southeast Asia.

In October 15, 1986, a bill to create an independent congressional commission on POWs to be headed by H. Ross Perot attracted 285 cosponsors from the

Congress. The Administration opposed that bill, which died in subcommittee on the last day of congressional sessions.

In May 1987, eight GOP Congressmen and myself offered a \$1 million reward for a defector who would come out of Laos, Cambodia, or Vietnam with a U.S. prisoner. On July 15, 1987, we increased the reward from \$1 million to \$2.4 million, having received additional money from sixteen members of Congress out of their personal funds.

On July 18, 1987, President Reagan announced he would send an envoy to Hanoi to discuss the missing in action. The visit marked the highest level delegation to Hanoi since the Woodcock trip in 1977. On August 1, 1987, presidential envoy, General John Vessey, Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, arrived in Hanoi for talks on the missing in action.

About a year ago, our President sent TOW missiles to an Ayatollah who took hostage men who were told to come home from Beirut but had stayed behind. If we can offer TOW missiles to an Ayatollah, I think we can afford to do no less for Americans who went to Southeast Asia to carry out this country's foreign policy.

Mr. Lasater: Professor Andre Van Chau, former Professor at the University of Saigon, will now address the humanitarian concerns in U.S.-Vietnam relations.

Professor Andre Chau

The first of my concerns in this area centers on the extent of human rights violations and the systematic way in which they are being committed. Second, I am concerned about the way the American and foreign media, friends, and allies overseas are responding to these violations.

The first major area of human rights violations can be seen in the reeducation camps. This is a new word that simply means prisons. Conditions in these camps have been described many times by Vietnamese refugees, but for some reason, many of their reports have been discredited in this country and elsewhere. The media have called their descriptions biased and unbelievable. I do not know why. I remember a scandal arose in 1978 after it was alleged that there were only about 315 political prisoners in Vietnam. The claim came from a small group of people in Saigon and was reported in the United States by a smaller group of writers and scholars. Those people in Vietnam have now been shown to be long-time allies of the communists. But in 1978, nobody questioned their credibility. Why is it that now, after thousands of eyewitness reports from Vietnam have told of the many violations by Hanoi, the media and scholars in this country continue to refute their credibility?

How many are prisoners in Vietnam now? Three years after the fall of Saigon, it was reported that the number was around 100,000 or 110,000 prisoners. Refugee reports, however, had put the figure at up to 300,000. In 1985, Vietnamese Minister of Interior Pham Hung said that there were only 10,000 prisoners. But refugee reports coming from Vietnam indicated that there were at least 60,000.

Around April 1987, Mai Chi Tho, a Politburo member and new Minister of the Interior, asserted that there are now 6,000 prisoners; refugees, however, claimed that there are at least 30,000 left in Vietnamese reeducation camps.

A second area of human rights violations is the creation of New Economic Zones. During the Vietnam War, many U.S. reporters came and said it was inhuman to relocate Vietnamese, to put them in so-called strategic hamlets. Reports about the relocation of the Montagnards, the people of the Central Highlands, called it a criminal act. And Hanoi continues to make relocation plans. Back in 1975, Hanoi wanted to relocate 10 million people over the next two decades. There have been continued reports from local, regional, and national officials that this target number has been reached. In the province of Dac Lac alone, according to an official report, 400,000 persons have been relocated. In the next five years, it is predicted that another half-million people will be forcibly relocated.

Back in the 1960s, when the stories of the relocation of Montagnards were first published, they were met by angry cries of protest against Saigon. Today, Hanoi receives virtually no criticism for its far more extreme relocation policy. In fact, there are now articles saying it is perfectly acceptable to relocate the Montagnards.

A third area of violations is the persecution of various religious groups in Vietnam. Hanoi is determined to destroy Catholicism in Vietnam, though there has always been some semblance of tolerance shown to Catholics. For example, last month a well-publicized ceremony occurred where Cardinal Tin Van Can of Hanoi met with Nguyen Van Linh and was assured that the policy of Vietnam is to preserve religious freedom. At the same time, Archbishop Nguyen Van Thuan of the Archdiocese of Saigon was--and is--in prison. In addition, Archbishop Nguyen Kim Dien of the Archdiocese of Hue was put under house arrest after he came to the defense of a nun who was arrested and accused of being a spy.

In July, a crackdown on the Dong Cong Congregational Order, which is a Vietnamese religious order. Sixty people were arrested, including the Superior General and Founder of the Order.

As for the Buddhists, a Vietnamese student union in Paris recently published a long list of 145 Vietnamese monks who had been arrested and are still in jail. Many of the Theravada Buddhists are suffering not only because they are Buddhists, but because they are Khmer Krom, the Khmer residing in Vietnam. Twenty-four Khmer Krom Theravada Buddhist monks have been killed, and 74 other Khmer Krom and Theravada Buddhist leaders are listed as being held in jail.

While there are only 30,000 Muslims in Vietnam, many have been persecuted. Not only are many of their leaders in jail, but possession of the Koran is forbidden. Pilgrimage to Mecca is forbidden. Even participation in a recent regional Muslim conference in Malaysia was forbidden.

In the Cao-Dai sect--a Vietnamese religion combining the teaching of Confucius, Taoism, Buddhism, and Catholicism--their followers have been persecuted

since 1975. The trial of two Cao-Dai leaders and 31 others was widely publicized in August 1983.

The Hoa-Hao sect is another target of persecution. The prophet and founder of that religion was assassinated by communists in 1946. And today, all the leaders of the Hoa-Hao sect are in jail, and their congregations are watched closely by state police.

Before the U.S. resumes talks with Hanoi and before Washington reaches any agreements with Vietnam, I think that there must be a very hard look at the way Hanoi is dealing with the Vietnamese people.

Mr. Lasater: I would like to ask my colleague, Ken Conboy, policy analyst with the Asian Studies Center dealing with Indochina, to discuss some of the economic and political changes that are underway in Vietnam.

Kenneth Conboy

Trying to understand and predict what the closed Vietnamese party and government are doing is difficult and, in some cases, impossible. Much of the behind-the-scenes infighting in Hanoi can only be imagined. Still, it would appear that today substantial political and economic changes are taking place in Vietnam. The reasons for these changes are obvious. The leaders in Hanoi are being driven by a desperate attempt to rescue their dismal economy. They have inherited a wide number of problems and their spinoff effects. Among them are malnutrition, a bad crop this year, unemployment, a chronic shortage of hard currency, inflation reaching 700 percent, and a disastrous continuation of major food subsidies. Right now, in fact, up to one-third of Vietnam's national budget is used to subsidize food prices.

These problems have been building up over the years, and the Vietnamese leaders have been slowly responding. In 1978, during the Fourth Party Congress, about 14 percent of the participating delegates were involved in economics. In 1982 at the Fifth Party Congress, that number had risen to 40 percent. The problem came to a head in mid-1986 resulting in the changes seen in the Sixth Party Congress in December.

The Sixth Congress designated three goals. First, the Vietnamese leaders said they wanted to increase grain production. Second, they professed a desire to increase the output of consumer goods; and finally, they would aim to increase exports to earn foreign currency. Underlying these goals was a two-fold pledge. The leaders in Hanoi said they would try to break the diplomatic and political isolation they have suffered since their invasion of Cambodia and to stop the economic stagnation in their country. To attain these goals, Hanoi envisioned a strategy that would include a widened campaign of self-criticism, becoming increasingly tolerant of Western ideas and fashions, and implementing economic reform.

The first two parts of this strategy have already been put into effect to a degree, resulting in what some have prematurely dubbed a tropical version of *glasnost*. For example, the widening of self-criticism can be seen in the popular

column called "NLV" in the party-run newspaper *Nhan Dan*, where an anonymous writer, who some think is Nguyen van Linh, has been exposing corruption and mismanagement. In many cases, this has led to the arrest of dishonest officials. At the same time, however, there are many limitations to this widening of criticism: Cambodia is off-limits, and criticism is confined to official party-run newspapers.

The increased tolerance of Western ideas and fashions has appeared in the love poems on the back page of *Nhan Dan*, blue jeans in Hanoi, and girls wearing makeup. Also more interviews are granted to the Western media. And in the new National Assembly balloting in April of this year, five candidates were allowed to debate. Of course, that was five candidates out of 496.

Western ideas are also seen in the promotion of tourism. The Vietnamese claim that they are in touch with over 70 tourist agencies around the world. There also has been some hotel construction in Hanoi. Of course, the Vietnamese leaders are counting on the economic spinoff in this. They also are looking for an economic spinoff of their attempts, since the spring of 1986, to lure back overseas Vietnamese, through both their tourism and their donations and gifts. Hanoi claims, in fact, that over half a million dollars has been donated from Germany and Canada for the purchase of printing machines in Ho Chi Minh City.

The third area of change called for in the Sixth Party Congress was economic reform, and I think this is the most significant and controversial. It must be viewed against a backdrop of major economic support and dependence on the Soviet Union. In mid-July of last year, Party General Secretary Truong Chinh returned from a visit to Moscow, and the debate intensified over what course of action should be taken to improve Vietnam's poor economic situation. Should there be reforms or a continuation of strict socialist policies? Should there be a degree of private enterprise, or should the Party force change?

Lines were drawn, and editorials in the official newspapers seesawed back and forth. Such leaders as Vo Van Kiet, Vo Chi Cong, and Nguyen Van Linh were calling for less government and increased decentralization. At the opposite end of the spectrum, Pham Hung, Le Quang Dao, and others were arguing for increased central control over the economy.

By the eve of the Sixth Party Congress, it appeared to some as if the conservatives, those calling for increased centralization, had the edge. But the actual result of the Congress was a compromise. Nguyen Van Linh, a reformer, was named the Party General Secretary. At the same time, caution against overspeedy reform was emphasized. There remained a crucial measure of commitment to continuity.

By the beginning of 1987, the debate grew more intense. Now it looks as though there are two possible broad scenarios for Vietnam that could result. A strong case can be made for either one.

On the one hand, there is the reformist trend, which would include the purification of the Party. It is said that approximately 190,000 members of the two million strong Vietnamese Communist Party have been expelled in recent years. In

addition, the last aging stalwarts who helped found the Indochinese Communist Party were out by April of this year. Forty newcomers joined the Central Committee, and in the new National Assembly, the percentage of Party members has decreased. Over half are new members, and most are nonpolitical professionals and experts.

An economist, Vo Van Kiet, was voted in as Vice Premier by the new National Assembly in June. At the same time, Vo Chi Cong, a moderate, was elected as President. Foreign observers who support the reformist trend point out that the conservatives who have risen during the same period are merely transitional figures. In particular, the ailing conservative, Premier Pham Hung, is said to have been voted in because of respect for his age.

There have been several reformist laws enacted since the beginning of this year, including: allowances for small family-owned private enterprises in Hanoi; a removal of checkpoints, which has eased trade between the provinces; allowing citizens to keep some of the money sent to them by overseas relatives; and lifting some restrictions on private transportation services in Hanoi.

More significant is the push for a new foreign investment code which is designed to attract hard foreign currency. It is based on an exhaustive study looking at 50 countries, including Singapore and Korea. The reformists hope for approval of this code in December.

An opposing conservative trend also exists. Advocates of this trend say that all that has happened in past months is "private-sector froth" on a stagnant, socialist economy. They point to the Sixth Party Congress, where a recommendation regarding the devolution of power to district levels was tempered by reminders to follow higher guidance. They also point out that reform will meet resistance from ideologues, the corrupt, and the middle ranks of the party and the bureaucracy, who do not want to see their privileges taken away.

In addition, there is an ongoing debate over the proposed foreign investment code. The draft was not approved last June, as many had predicted. Furthermore, it has been on the boards since 1985, and there is still a debate over the right of investors to withdraw capital.

It is very difficult to see in which direction Vietnam is headed at this point, but there are at least two indicators to look for in the months ahead.

One indicator would be to watch the new foreign investment code. Many people have been putting a lot of emphasis on this, viewing it as almost a litmus test. Indeed, if it is passed intact in December, it would certainly be a boost to the reformists. At the same time, there is talk about another purification campaign that would begin either this month or next. Some Party officials are saying that it could result in expelling as much as a fourth of the Party. If there were such a purification campaign, again, it could boost the hand of the reformists.

I believe that there will be an ongoing compromise between reformists and conservatives. Change is probably going to be slower than many are claiming right now. Even Vietnamese reformists say that, under ideal circumstances, it would take

four or five years for their reforms to take effect. As it now stands, circumstances are not ideal. Reformists also are saying that they see Western technology and capital as instrumental to bringing Vietnam out of its economic doldrums, and this same leadership has said that they are going to try to break the economic and political isolation around Vietnam. Therefore, regardless of what path is taken, I see a continued and increased effort by Hanoi to court the West to help reach their goals.



Mr. Lasater: We have heard some of the complexities of what may be involved in moving toward normalized relations with Vietnam. I would like to invite the audience to make comments or ask questions.

Mr. Ngoc Bich (National Congress of Vietnamese Americans): I would like to ask Colonel Sauvageot what are his thoughts about the possibility of normalization of relations between Vietnam and the United States?

Colonel Sauvageot: The U.S. position on normalization of relations with Vietnam is that the Vietnamese government must first give the fullest possible accounting for our missing in action. In other words, they have to clear up the MIA-POW issue to our satisfaction. The second condition is (I do not mean this in order of priority) they must withdraw from Cambodia.

I agree with those conditions, but let me say, I was an early advocate of normalizing relations with Vietnam. After the war ended, I believed that it would be worthwhile for the United States to explore normalizing relations with Vietnam on a very realistic approach. If such were possible, I believed we could try to forestall or prevent their becoming inordinately dependent on the Soviet Union.

I am not an advocate of normalization, however, because there has been too much water over the political dam. First of all, the Soviets are in there strong. We cannot hope under the current conditions to make any appreciable headway in weaning them away from the USSR. The crucial thing is for the United States to follow ASEAN's lead. The ASEAN states are the regional countries most directly affected, and they have been the most innovative in trying to find a political solution. It is not an objective of the ASEAN states to bleed Vietnam white over the years, but they have very practical reasons for not wanting to have a Soviet-supported Vietnamese occupation force on the border of Thailand.

Concerning the two conditions for improved U.S.-Vietnam relations, the United States has not accepted Vietnamese claims that they have made a good faith effort on the MIAs. Nor have we accepted their promises to pull out of Cambodia. There are no indications that the United States has wavered from these positions, and I am sure that this Administration will not.

It is very difficult to predict what future administrations will do, but I believe that there is sufficient bipartisan support for the basic posture of support for ASEAN. I even said to Foreign Minister Nguyen Thach, in a private aside, that what we offered the Vietnamese was very little but that it was a remarkable thing

for President Reagan, toward the latter part of his second term and besieged with congressional hearings on the Iran-Contra business, to make the effort to pick a special emissary and send him to Hanoi to try to elicit a resumption of Vietnamese cooperation on the MIA-POW question.

I added that if Minister Thach found what was offered to be insufficient, he would never see another such initiative from the current Administration because the political campaigns would be heating up. So it will be well into the next Administration before it comes up on the agenda again to this degree.

Rawlein Soberano (QSOFT): Captain McDaniel, do you hold it against the Vietnamese for using the POWs as a bargaining chip with the United States?

Captain McDaniel: I realize, knowing the Vietnamese as I do and having lived with them for six years, that they must have way to save face. I believe that today they want to talk to the United States government about prisoners of war. If we were to say: "Hanoi, you have our prisoners. Would you go into Cambodia and Laos and search for our prisoners," Hanoi would go search and find them. We would pay whatever price they asked, because this issue is that important. We would get our men back, we would get on with America, and the Vietnamese would save face. That is a very simple solution to a very complex problem.

Bill Carpenter (SRI International): To follow up on that question: at the end of your talk you mentioned the TOWs for political hostages. I do not think you intended to equate that to what I think is an entirely different category. Prisoners of war are different from a political hostage.

Captain McDaniel: What I am saying is that we have set a precedent by offering materials for the return of hostages. I do not consider the POWs as hostages. They are men who went to carry out this country's foreign policy. When we offered medical supplies in the early 1980s to the Laotians for prisoners, that was the same principle as offering TOW missiles to the Ayatollah. So the precedent is there. I contend that this issue is so critical to this nation that we have to resolve it.

Henry Gottlieb (Associated Press): Colonel Sauvageot, do you share Captain McDaniel's view that the Vietnamese statement during the Vessey mission that there might be some live Americans up in the hills, is possibly a face-saving way for bringing some of these people out?

Colonel Sauvageot: I truly do not know the answer to that question. I do not know if that was a signal or not. It may be, because it would not be unprecedented for the Vietnamese to let us in on something little by little. I just know that the Administration operates on the assumption that there are live prisoners of war, but has not been able to find a smoking gun.

Much of the Administration's approach to the MIA problem has been to provide the Vietnamese with avenues of face saving. Remember Captain McDaniel mentioned earlier about the 400 remains? I happen to have been the interpreter for that mortician in the congressional hearings at which he spoke. I was personally

convinced of that man's integrity and sincerity. He passed polygraph tests by the Defense Intelligence Agency. He was, indeed, a mortician in Hanoi, and he gave an address where those remains were stored. Congressman Lester Wolfe asked the Vietnamese to let him in and look, and the Vietnamese said no. Of course, they invited him in to look a couple of months later, after they could have moved them. But yet, since we have not been able to get proof, it makes better sense to continue the kinds of negotiations with the Vietnamese that we have been conducting, while not undermining our treaty relationship with Thailand or the interests of other regional friends.

Captain McDaniel: I believe Bobby Garwood, who came out in 1979, was a signal. About one year ago, two foreign journalists visited my office. They were escorted into my office; they gave me their cards: *Pravda* and TASS. They interviewed me about my organization. We spent 45 minutes. As they were leaving they mentioned two things to me. They said, "You are very lucky this interview will appear in a very prestigious magazine, *Pravda*." Then they mentioned POW-MIAs and left.

Two weeks after their visit, my navigator's ID card showed up in the hands of the United States government; it had come out with three ID cards and seven sets of remains. My navigator was alive, on the ground, for four days in Vietnam, and then radio contact was lost. After that visit, I went to the Defense Intelligence Agency and had a 45-minute conversation with General Shufeld. At the end of it, he said, "It's coincidental."

I went to a journalist who had worked this issue for years for *The Wall Street Journal* and said, "Have you ever heard the name James Kelly Patterson [Captain McDaniel's navigator]?" I was told that, "I have reason to believe, Captain McDaniel, your navigator is alive in North Vietnam." His theory was that the enemy, on shutdown in Vietnam, separated out the men who had special talents--the navigator, electronic warfare officer, or radar observer--believing they had more talents than us pilots. They put us in one system and them in another.

On May 19, the day I was shot down, we lost seven aircraft, nine crewmen. Four of the crew who are missing all had special talents, and three of the four were known to be alive on the ground. Two of them gave a press conference, and, of course, they talked with my navigator for four days. The fourth one was not seen.

I looked at a RAND Corporation study. The pilots have come home in much larger numbers, and this journalist's theory was that they made a decision between 1966 and 1969 to keep men with special talents behind to maintain the equipment that the U.S. would leave behind when they won the war in Washington.

Mr. Gottlieb: This is about something you mentioned right at the beginning about breaking the economic boycott against Vietnam. Can you give me some illustrations of that and tell me how serious you think it is?

Mr. Conboy: One nation that comes to mind is Japan. The distressing point about Japan-Vietnam ties, although relatively small compared to their other trade ties

around the world, is that it is not just commodity trade, but it is also infrastructural aid. Of course, Japan is not alone, and the Vietnamese themselves are saying that they will succeed in breaking that economic embargo. The new foreign investment code that I mentioned is part of that strategy.

Ho Chi Minh City will be the site of a plant by Honda that will be assembling motorcycles for export to client states in Laos and Cambodia. That is just one example of a foreign company coming in, looking to make a quick profit from the relatively large Vietnamese population, and also perhaps looking toward Vietnam's offshore oil.

Mr. Lasater: It is not just a factor of the capitalists trying to make money. It is also a factor of leverage: how to influence Vietnamese reform? We have managed to isolate Vietnam since its invasion of Cambodia, and that has cost Vietnam enormously in terms of its economic situation at home. If you open up the doors to Western aid and assistance now, it tends to make their position in Cambodia more tenable, if they desire that as a policy goal. The objective, as you know, was to link the aid and trade embargo to their occupation of Cambodia, and it remains a real problem as to how to get the Vietnamese out of Cambodia, because the Vietnamese have a long-time goal of occupying all of Indochina for some time.

Ambassador Leonard Unger: I am curious about Laos. I realize the situation is different there. Do you think there are any POWs physically confined in Laos?

Captain McDaniel: Yes, I do. In fact, we had a letter that we released on Monday of this week from a young man whose father received a letter from the Air Force giving his full name, his date of birth, his aircraft type, and then, a five-digit identifier, which could have been the tail number of the aircraft; it turned out to be his zip code. He said, "I'm at a camp with five other Americans," at a specific location 41 miles north of the Mekong River at a place in Laos. That, to me, is pretty specific. At least it needs to be checked out. I think we should put someone on an aircraft to go out to Laos to investigate the report.

George Brissans (Voice of America): You have talked about the Soviet influence in the whole situation out there. I wonder how direct do you think it is in some areas economically. Are we seeing the Vietnamese version of *glasnost*? Does it come out of Moscow? And also, should the United States be talking to Moscow about POWs and MIAs.

Colonel Sauvageot: Well, the Vietnamese are concerned, we know they are concerned, about the Soviet efforts to improve their relationship with China and to cut their economic outlays to Vietnam. That is what was behind the criticism that Soviet aid had been misused, and how they are now supposed to take the iron broom and clean it up.

There are also other significant indicators that neither the Soviets nor the Vietnamese are really giving up their ultimate objective of maintaining Vietnamese control of Cambodia. For example, in Gorbachev's Vladivostok speech, in which he was forthcoming on Afghanistan, he makes no reference to Cambodia.

More recently, the Soviet Foreign Minister, on a visit to Jakarta, said that an analogy between Cambodia and Afghanistan would be imprecise. And yet they are trying to cut the cost of maintaining that control. It is a fine line.

Captain McDaniel: I believe Mikhail Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan hold the key to all human rights issues. I went to Geneva in 1985 at the request of a hundred members of Congress, who signed a petition for me to deliver to President Reagan to bring up the POW-MIA issue in his talks with Gorbachev on humanitarian rights. He was briefed prior to going to the meeting; the meeting was private. I do not know whether it was discussed or not.

But yes, I believe Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan could resolve a human rights issue by dealing--because I believe Moscow controls activity in Hanoi. When I was in Hanoi, they had Soviets there in the camp with us monitoring our imprisonment.

Mr. Conboy: On the economic front, there has been occasional disappointment from Moscow over Vietnamese wastage of their economic aid. In June of this past year, however, the Soviets announced that they were going to commit eight to nine billion rubles in economic aid by the year 1990. In dollar amounts--eleven to thirteen billion--this represents a serious commitment to Vietnam. In addition, when Nguyen Van Linh visited Moscow this year and came back in July, he said, "Our unswerving policy is to completely rely on the Soviet Union and our other socialist countries to build and defend our country." I think these examples suggest that the connection between the Soviet Union and Vietnam continues to be very deep and broad.

Professor Van Chau: During the last three or four decades, Hanoi (though operating outwardly as an independent force--and they always tried to maintain that facade) kept a very heavy reliance on help, first from China and Russia, and later exclusively from Russia.

I think that the older Vietnamese leaders were brought up in an atmosphere of nationalism before they came into communism. The reality is now that Hanoi is totally controlled by the purse strings and by ideological domination.

Congressman Walter Judd: Captain McDaniel, you said you believe that President Reagan and Mr. Gorbachev could solve the prisoner of war issue. What price would the United States and President Reagan have to pay to Mr. Gorbachev to get some prisoners of war out of Vietnam? Relations between the U.S. and the Soviet Union are more important than anything else, and if the United States makes a concession that would increase the stature of Mr. Gorbachev and reduce the bargaining skills or power of the United States, the price might be considered even more impossible to pay than keeping some prisoners of war there.

Captain McDaniel: I agree, the price could be high. But I contend the thing that makes our country so great is that we as individuals are important in this country. But when policy makers for this country write off soldiers, that is tragic. No American goes into combat prepared to be abandoned by his country. I consider this so critical to this nation because of the impact on my sons and my children's

children who will come forward to protect this country. I believe this issue to be so important that we must pay any price whatever to resolve it.

Colonel Sauvageot: I perceive the Administration's strategy as having been, and continuing to be, a strategy of trying to persuade the Vietnamese government that it is in their interests to render the fullest possible accounting of POWs-MIAs. We must do it without paying, as Congressman Judd suggested, too high a price. Those of us who are soldiers know we may lose our lives and our freedom, but we also know that the reason we are willing to lose our lives and freedom is to preserve larger U.S. interests. That is why we have combat in the first place.

So the Administration's strategy has been to try to persuade the Vietnamese, but not in a way that undermines our larger strategic interests with ASEAN and China and other countries in the region. And the Reagan Administration has put its money where its mouth is. The Joint Casualty Resolutions Center has gone from 14 to 26 people; the Central Identification Lab in Honolulu from 12 to 41. That's an increase of 63 people that are working fulltime to resolve that issue.

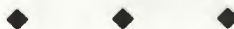
I have had Vietnamese in the Foreign Ministry ask me privately, "What is in it for the Vietnamese government to cooperate with the United States in rendering the fullest possible accounting?"

My answer privately to them is, the answer depends on whether you take a short-range or long-range view of your interests. If you take a short-range view, the answer is probably nothing, because we cannot--and we should not--compromise larger U.S. geopolitical interest to elicit your cooperation on this issue. But if you take a long-range view, it is like opening a bank account in the United States that starts to draw interest. It is a funny kind of bank account, because you can not get your money out until some unforeseen point in time when the multilateral issues that divide us now--read "Cambodia," primarily--are resolved in some satisfactory way, by some unforeseen format, at some unforeseen future point in time.

In other words, resolving the MIA issue is a necessary but insufficient condition for better relations with the United States. So you ought to take care of that first, because geopolitical history suggests that geopolitical relationships are not immutable. In my own lifetime I have seen Japan go from being our worst enemy to being a strategic ally in the northern Pacific. I remember my colleagues making eloquent speeches about keeping Red China out of the United Nations, and now we are improving our relations with China. So take the long view. That is my message to the Vietnamese.

Mr. Lasater: I think on this particular issue, we will all have to take the long view in terms of its resolution. But we do have some very immediate things to be concerned with, and of course, the POW issue is one of them, as well as our concerns about what is happening to the Vietnamese in Vietnam itself.

I would like to draw this session to a close, and thank you for your participation.





THE WHITE HOUSE
CORRESPONDENCE TRACKING WORKSHEET

C0084

INCOMING

DATE RECEIVED: FEBRUARY 22, 1988

8805280

NAME OF CORRESPONDENT: MR. HANG SAO

SUBJECT: WRITES IN SUPPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S
POLICY IN LAOS AND NEED A RECOMMENDATION ON
WHAT LEVEL THEY SHOULD CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN
IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS

ROUTE TO: OFFICE/AGENCY (STAFF NAME)	ACTION		DISPOSITION	
	ACT CODE	DATE YY/MM/DD	TYPE RESP	C COMPLETED D YY/MM/DD
DEPARTMENT OF STATE	BAR ORG	88/02/24	TR	A 88/02/26
REFERRAL NOTE:				
REFERRAL NOTE:				
REFERRAL NOTE:				
REFERRAL NOTE:				
REFERRAL NOTE:				

COMMENTS: SIGNS FOR MR. PAKAO HER, LEADER OF THE
ETHNICS' LIBERATION ORGANIZATION OF LAOS

ADDITIONAL CORRESPONDENTS: MEDIA:L INDIVIDUAL CODES: _____

MI MAIL USER CODES: (A) _____ (B) _____ (C) _____

- *****
- | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---|
| *ACTION CODES: | *DISPOSITION | *OUTGOING | * |
| * | * | *CORRESPONDENCE: | * |
| *A-APPROPRIATE ACTION | *A-ANSWERED | *TYPE RESP=INITIALS | * |
| *C-COMMENT/RECOM | *B-NON-SPEC-REFERRAL | * OF SIGNER | * |
| *D-DRAFT RESPONSE | *C-COMPLETED | * CODE = A | * |
| *F-FURNISH FACT SHEET | *S-SUSPENDED | *COMPLETED = DATE OF | * |
| *I-INFO COPY/NO ACT NEC* | | * OUTGOING | * |
| *R-DIRECT REPLY W/COPY * | | * | * |
| *S-FOR-SIGNATURE | * | * | * |
| *X-INTERIM REPLY | * | * | * |
- *****

REFER QUESTIONS AND ROUTING UPDATES TO CENTRAL REFERENCE
(ROOM 75, OEOB) EXT-2590
KEEP THIS WORKSHEET ATTACHED TO THE ORIGINAL INCOMING
LETTER AT ALL TIMES AND SEND COMPLETED RECORD TO RECORDS
MANAGEMENT.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

TRANSMITTAL FORM

S/S 8805280

Date March 1, 1988

FOR: Mr. Paul Schott Stevens
Executive Secretary
National Security Council
The White House

REFERENCE:

To: President Reagan

From: Mr. Hang Sao

Date: February 28, 1988

Subject: Supports Administration's Policy in Laos and Desires
It to Continue

WH Referral Dated: February 24, 1988
NSC ID# (if any): 543471

_____ The attached item was sent directly to the
Department of State.

ACTION TAKEN:

_____ A draft reply is attached.

_____ A draft reply will be forwarded.

_____ A translation is attached.

An information copy of a direct reply is attached.

_____ We believe no response is necessary for the reason
cited below.

_____ The Department of State has no objection to the
proposed travel.

_____ Other (see remarks).

REMARKS:

Alinda L Kennicott
For Director
Secretariat Staff



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

February 26, 1988

Mr. Hang Sao
7559 E. Robinwood
Detroit, MI 48234

Dear Mr. Hang Sao:

Thank you for your letter of February 28 to President Reagan concerning the Ethnics Liberation Organization of Laos. I am replying on behalf of the President.

While we understand the motivation for your organization's existence, the United States does not give support or assistance to any group which is attempting to overthrow the current government of Laos. The United States maintains normal diplomatic relations with that government.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey V. S. Millington".

Jeffrey V. S. Millington
Acting Director
Office of Vietnam, Laos and
Cambodia Affairs

8805280

T H E W H I T E H O U S E O F F I C E

REFERRAL

FEBRUARY 24, 1988

TO: DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ACTION REQUESTED:
DIRECT REPLY, FURNISH INFO COPY

DESCRIPTION OF INCOMING:

ID: 543471
MEDIA: LETTER,
TO: PRESIDENT REAGAN
FROM: MR. HANG SAO
ETHNICS' LIBERATION ORGANIZATION
OF LAOS
7559 EAST ROBINWOOD
DETROIT MI 48234

SUBJECT: WRITES IN SUPPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S
POLICY IN LACS AND NEED A RECOMMENDATION ON
WHAT LEVEL THEY SHOULD CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN
IN ORDER TO ACHEVE THEIR GOALS

PROMPT ACTION IS ESSENTIAL -- IF REQUIRED ACTION HAS NOT BEEN
TAKEN WITHIN 9 WORKING DAYS OF RECEIPT, PLEASE TELEPHONE THE
UNDERSIGNED AT 456-7486.

RETURN CORRESPONDENCE, WORKSHEET AND COPY OF RESPONSE
(OR DRAFT) TO:
AGENCY LIAISON, ROOM 91, THE WHITE HOUSE, 20500

SALLY KELLEY
DIRECTOR OF AGENCY LIAISON
PRESIDENTIAL CORRESPONDENCE

11
D05

543471

8805280



**ETHNICS' LIBERATION
ORGANIZATION OF LAOS**



February 28, 1988

Honorable President Ronald Reagan
of the United States of America
in the White House
Washington D. C.

The Honorable President Ronald reagan:

It is our understanding that communism is increasing their efforts towards aggressive propaganda in Laos. In the past twelve years, Laos has been under the control of North Vietnam and the Soviet Union. This has led to a society plagued with poverty, and has completely destroyed the fundamental way of human rights.

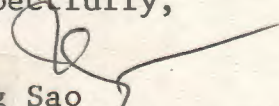
This is not only the Lao problem, it is also our freedom fighter's problem. The Lao Patriots (Ethnics Liberation Organization of Laos, led by Mr. Pakao Her) have been doing its utmost to strive for freedom and democracy for the people in Laos the past twelve years. The accomplishments of the ELOL have now become the people's hope and are supported by the majority of the Lao people inside and outside of Laos.

We are fully supporting your regime of the regional cause of the South East Asia problem. Recently, the situation has been moved along closer to the point that you have drawn a line for in the last three and half year. Since you are going to leave your office by the end of 1988. We are very much needed your recommendation on what level we should continue to maintain in order to achieve our goals. We need you to plant something for us before leaving the office in Washington D.C.

Your thoughtful and kindness will certainly giving the Lao-tian people to have a brighter future.

Hang Sao
7559 E. Robinwood
Detroit, Michigan 48234

Respectfully,


Hang Sao
on behalf of Mr. Pakao Her

HS/cm

5

880580



ETHNIC LIBERATION
ORGANIZATION OF LAOS



The National Front for the Liberation of Laos

It is our understanding that the National Front for the Liberation of Laos is a political organization that has been formed in Laos. It is our understanding that the National Front for the Liberation of Laos is a political organization that has been formed in Laos. It is our understanding that the National Front for the Liberation of Laos is a political organization that has been formed in Laos.

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U.S. National Archives & Records Administration

Current Status Details for CTRH RECID: 627673 MAIN SUBCODE: FG006-01

Current Status	Open
User Name	dbarrie
Status Date	2019-03-06
Case Number	S09-236
Notes	16 p. Transferred to CO084

Review Status History

No.	Status	Date	User	Case Number	Notes
1	Open	2019-03-06	dbarrie	S09-236	16 p. Transferred to CO084
2	Open	2011-03-23	KUlrich	S09-236	
3	None	2010-09-13	dbarrie		
4	None	2010-09-13	dbarrie		
5	Open	2010-09-13	mking		
6	Open	2010-09-13	dbarrie		
7	None	2010-09-08	swilliams		
8	None	2010-09-08	swilliams		
9	None	2010-09-08	dbarrie		
10	Open	2010-07-14	KUlrich	S09-236	

627673

ID # FG 006-01

WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENCE TRACKING WORKSHEET

O - OUTGOING

H - INTERNAL

I - INCOMING

Date Correspondence Received (YY/MM/DD) 88.11.29

Name of Correspondent: Mr. Mrs. Miss Ms. Ruth Hammond

MI Mail Report User Codes: (A) _____ (B) _____ (C) _____

Subject: Writes concerning Laotian Among resistance movement.

ROUTE TO:

ACTION

DISPOSITION

Office/Agency	(Staff Name)	Action Code	Tracking Date YY/MM/DD	Type of Response	Code	Completion Date YY/MM/DD
	<u>CoCoza</u>	<u>ORIGINATOR</u>	<u>88/12/02</u>			<u>88/12/14</u>
	<u>DOS</u>	<u>R</u>	<u>88/12/07</u>			<u>88/12/14</u>
			<u>1 1</u>			<u>1 1</u>
			<u>1 1</u>			<u>1 1</u>
			<u>1 1</u>			<u>1 1</u>

ACTION CODES:

- A - Appropriate Action
- C - Comment/Recommendation
- D - Draft Response
- F - Furnish Fact Sheet to be used as Enclosure

- I - Info Copy Only/No Action Necessary
- R - Direct Reply w/Copy
- S - For Signature
- X - Interim Reply

DISPOSITION CODES:

- A - Answered
- B - Non-Special Referral
- C - Completed
- S - Suspended

FOR OUTGOING CORRESPONDENCE:

- Type of Response = Initials of Signer
- Code = "A"
- Completion Date = Date of Outgoing

Comments: _____

Keep this worksheet attached to the original incoming letter.
 Send all routing updates to Central Reference (Room 75, OEOB).
 Always return completed correspondence record to Central Files.
 Refer questions about the correspondence tracking system to Central Reference, ext. 2590.

RECORDS MANAGEMENT ONLY

CLASSIFICATION SECTION

No. of Additional Correspondents: _____ Media: L Individual Codes: 4620 _____

Prime Subject Code: EG 006 01 Secondary Subject Codes: ND 016 _____
PU _____
CO 084 _____

PRESIDENTIAL REPLY

<u>Code</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Comment</u>	<u>Form</u>
<u>C</u>	_____	<u>Time:</u> _____	<u>P-</u> _____
<u>DSP</u>	_____	<u>Time:</u> _____	<u>Media:</u> _____

SIGNATURE CODES:

CPn - Presidential Correspondence

- n - 0 - Unknown
- n - 1 - Ronald Wilson Reagan
- n - 2 - Ronald Reagan
- n - 3 - Ron
- n - 4 - Dutch
- n - 5 - Ron Reagan
- n - 6 - Ronald
- n - 7 - Ronnie

CLn - First Lady's Correspondence

- n - 0 - Unknown
- n - 1 - Nancy Reagan
- n - 2 - Nancy
- n - 3 - Mrs. Ronald Reagan

CBn - Presidential & First Lady's Correspondence

- n - 1 - Ronald Reagan - Nancy Reagan
- n - 2 - Ron - Nancy

MEDIA CODES:

- B - Box/package
- C - Copy
- D - Official document
- G - Message
- H - Handcarried
- L - Letter
- M - Mailgram
- O - Memo
- P - Photo
- R - Report
- S - Sealed
- T - Telegram
- V - Telephone
- X - Miscellaneous
- Y - Study

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

TRANSMITTAL FORM

S/S 8835556

Date December 13, 1988

FOR: Mr. Paul Schott Stevens
Executive Secretary
National Security Council
The White House

REFERENCE:

To: James Brady
From: Ms. Ruth Hammond
Date: November 26, 1988
Subject: Lao Hmong Resistance Movement

WH Referral Dated: December 7, 1988
NSC ID# (if any): 627673

 The attached item was sent directly to the
Department of State.

ACTION TAKEN:

- A draft reply is attached.
- A draft reply will be forwarded.
- A translation is attached.
- x An information copy of a direct reply is attached.
- We believe no response is necessary for the reason
cited below.
- The Department of State has no objection to the
proposed travel.
- Other (see remarks).

REMARKS:

Martha V. Symanet
for Director
Secretariat Staff



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

December 12, 1988

Ms. Ruth Hammond
909 Summit Avenue, Apt. 6
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55403

Dear Ms. Hammond:

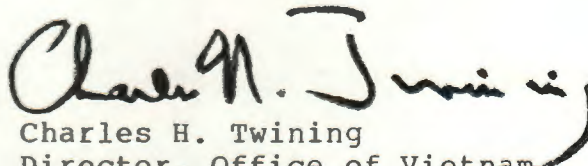
Your letter of November 26, 1988, to James Brady, Press Secretary at the White House, has been referred to this office for response.

The United States has maintained diplomatic relations with the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic (LPDR) since the LPDR was founded in 1975. We do not recognize, support, or encourage any Lao resistance group. Nor do we encourage private Americans to become involved in those kinds of activities.

The United States and General Vang Pao did cooperate closely during the years of conflict preceding the founding of the LPDR in 1975. We understand that he is now in the United States as a private citizen. The United States Government has no connection with any of his activities, either in this country or abroad.

I hope this information has been helpful.

Sincerely,


Charles H. Twining
Director, Office of Vietnam,
Laos, and Cambodia Affairs

THE WHITE HOUSE

8835556
OFFICE
'88 DEC-07 8:39 AM

REFERRAL

DECEMBER 7, 1988

TO: DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ACTION REQUESTED:

DIRECT REPLY, FURNISH INFO COPY

DESCRIPTION OF INCOMING:

ID: 627673

MEDIA: LETTER, DATED NOVEMBER 26, 1988

TO: JAMES BRADY

FROM: MS. RUTH HAMMOND
APARTMENT 6
909 SUMMIT AVENUE
MINNEAPOLIS MN 55403

SUBJECT: WRITES CONCERNING LAOTIAN HMONG RESISTANCE
MOVEMENT

PROMPT ACTION IS ESSENTIAL -- IF REQUIRED ACTION HAS NOT BEEN
TAKEN WITHIN 9 WORKING DAYS OF RECEIPT, PLEASE TELEPHONE THE
UNDERSIGNED AT 456-7486.

RETURN CORRESPONDENCE, WORKSHEET AND COPY OF RESPONSE
(OR DRAFT) TO:

AGENCY LIAISON, ROOM 91, THE WHITE HOUSE, 20500

SALLY KELLEY
DIRECTOR OF AGENCY LIAISON
PRESIDENTIAL CORRESPONDENCE

State

909 Summit Ave., Apt. 6
Minneapolis, MN 55403
(612) 377-0173
November 26, 1988

James Brady
Press Secretary
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.
Washington, DC 20500

8835556

'88 DEC-07 8:40 AM

Dear Mr. Brady:

I am writing an article about the Laotian Hmong resistance movement for a weekly newspaper called the Twin Cities Reader, and I would be grateful if you or an appropriate assistant could answer the following questions for me.

1. Does the Hmong resistance movement--known as the United Lao National Liberation Front or Neo Hom and led by former CIA-backed General Vang Pao--receive any assistance from the United States? This would be in terms of financial, military, or humanitarian aid and/or help from military or CIA advisors.
2. Was General Vang Pao's ranch in Montana a gift from the CIA as a reward for his service during the war in Laos? Does he receive any retirement pay or other pay from the CIA or U.S. Government? I have been told that he is given \$2,000 a month in retirement pay from the CIA. Is that true?
3. Has General Vang Pao met with President Reagan, Vice President Bush or other Administration officials any time since 1980 to discuss strategy in Laos, as he has claimed to his followers? If not, has he made requests for meetings with Administration officials that were refused? If he is working with the U.S. Government, who does he meet with, in which departments?
4. Does the United States regard Neo Hom as an effective resistance force?
5. Does the United States officially or unofficially back any other resistance groups in Laos, Cambodia, or Vietnam? I am particularly interested in Pa Kao Her's Chao Fa movement or any lowland Lao resistance groups.
6. Hmong leaders have told Hmong refugees in the United States that George Bush "likes to make war" and has stated that he will fight a war against the Laotian Communists if elected. Hmong leaders have also told followers that if they contribute money to Neo Hom now, President Reagan will reimburse them after they have won back Laos. Are either of these two claims valid?

7. Does the CIA still keep tabs on Vang Pao's activities? Is the government aware that he is raising millions of dollars from Hmong refugees, many of them on welfare, to support his resistance movement? Is it not a violation of the Neutrality Act for Vang Pao to be raising funds to fight his own private war against Laos? If it is, why does he escape prosecution? Is he being used to carry out privately the Reagan Administration's policy toward Communist Laos?

8. Has Vang Pao ever been investigated by the U.S. Government for his alleged role in heroin production during the war in Laos or for the diversion of CIA funds intended to pay his soldiers to his own personal use or for unjustified execution of his own troops? If so, what were the results of the investigations?

9. Has the U.S. investigated claims that Vang Pao was responsible for the pushback of Hmong into Laos by the Thai on March 15, 1987? (See enclosed report.) If so, what was the Government's conclusion?

10. More Hmong are now willing to come to the United States from Ban Vinai Refugee Camp in Thailand because they believe that Vang Pao's endeavor to win back Laos has failed. Does the Administration agree that continued resistance is futile?

11. I have been informed that late last spring a Hmong man named Nhia Kou Vang was stopped by the FBI in California shortly after he returned from Thailand and had six videocassettes temporarily confiscated from him and copied. The content of these videotapes allegedly showed how Neo Hom troops created border incidents between the Thai and Lao; afterwards, Neo Hom allegedly had to pay the Thai government an "under the table" fine. Do you have any information on this incident?

12. Did George Bush ever meet with or talk with Vang Pao or oversee any decisions regarding Vang Pao and the Hmong resistance in his capacity as CIA director in 1976?

13. Is the U.S. Government aware of any financial connection between the Neo Hom resistance and the Hmong social service agency, Lao Family Community, Inc., both of them led by General Vang Pao?

Any help you can give me in responding to these questions will be very much appreciated. To meet my deadline, I would need a reply by December 15. If someone wants to telephone me instead of writing, it is easiest to reach me afternoons or evenings at (612) 377-0173.

Sincerely,



Ruth Hammond

Report by Erica Hagen, Los Angeles
Refers to question nine.

THE PLIGHT OF HMONG REFUGEES IN THAILAND

HMONG PEOPLE HAVE BEEN SUFFERING FOR A LONG TIME. IT HAS BEEN 30 YEARS SINCE THEY WERE LIVING PEACEFULLY ON THEIR MOUNTAINTOPS. THEY HAVE SUFFERED AT THE HANDS OF THE CIA. THEY HAVE SUFFERED AT THE HANDS OF THE PHATHET LAO AND VIETNAMESE COMMUNISTS. THEY HAVE SUFFERED IN REFUGEE CAMPS IN THAILAND. MANY HAVE AND STILL ARE SUFFERING IN TRYING TO ADAPT TO THE VERY DIFFERENT LIFESTYLE AND CULTURE IN THE UNITED STATES.

BUT THOSE WHO ARE THE MOST VULNERABLE; THOSE WHO HAVE SUFFERED THE LONGEST AND WHO ARE SUFFERING THE MOST RIGHT NOW ARE THOSE HMONG WHO HAVE BEEN LIVING IN LAOS SINCE THE COMMUNIST TAKEOVER OF THE COUNTRY. MANY OF THEM HAVE BEEN TRYING TO ESCAPE INTO THAILAND IN THE PAST FEW YEARS DESPITE THE DECLARATION BY THAILAND THAT THEY WILL NOT ACCEPT ANY MORE REFUGEES. LARGE NUMBERS OF HMONG HAVE BEEN FORCED BACK TO LAOS. MANY ARE KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN KILLED. AN ESTIMATED 3000 TO 6000 HMONG ARE HIDING IN BAN VINAI, UNDOCUMENTED, NOT RECOGNIZED AS REFUGEES.

BY NOW, EVERYONE KNOWS THAT ON MARCH 15, THAI SOLDIERS ENTERED BAN VINAI, ARRESTED 108 PEOPLE, AND TURNED 38 HMONG OVER TO LAOTIAN MILITARY TO BE TAKEN BACK TO LAOS. THERE HAVE BEEN ACCUSATIONS AGAINST BOTH THE THAI GOVERNMENT AND THE US GOVERNMENT. CERTAINLY EACH SHARES IN THE RESPONSIBILITY AND MUST BE PRESSURED TO LIVE UP TO PROMISES MADE AND TO ASSURE THAT THE BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS OF REFUGEES ARE PROTECTED AND THAT FIRST ASYLUM IS PRESERVED.

BUT THE US AND THAI GOVERNMENTS ARE NOT THE ONES WHO ORIGINALLY MADE THE DECISION THAT "THOSE 38 PEOPLE SHOULD BE SENT BACK TO LAOS." THERE IS NOW IRREFUTABLE EVIDENCE AS TO WHO IS ULTIMATLY RESPONSIBLE. THE ANSWER IS VERY SHOCKING BECAUSE IT IS THE PEOPLE WHO SHOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PROTECTION OF HMONG PEOPLE, NOT THEIR PERSECUTION: GENERAL VANG PAO AND THE HMONG LEADERSHIP IN BAN VINAI REFUGEE CAMP.

EVERYONE KNOWS VERY WELL THAT THE REASON THAT SO MANY HMONG HAVE STAYED IN BAN VINAI FOR 12 YEARS IS THE PROMISE EVERY YEAR BY GENERAL VANG PAO THAT "NEXT YEAR WE WILL TAKE LAOS BACK". EVERY FAMILY HAS GIVEN MONEY TO "NIA HOM", VANG PAO'S RESISTANCE MOVEMENT. IF YOU HAVE RELATIVES IN LAOS WHO WRITE TO YOU, YOU KNOW OF THE PROBLEMS CAUSED TO FAMILIES IN THE VILLAGES BY "NIA HOM". THEY DEMAND TO BE GIVEN RICE TO EAT AND YOUNG MEN TO SEND TO FIGHT. "IF YOU DON'T SUPPORT US, YOU MUST BE A COMMUNIST AND WE WILL KILL YOU." BUT WHEN THE COMMUNIST GOVERNMENT DISCOVERS THAT VILLAGERS ARE SUPPLYING VANG PAO'S SOLDIERS, THEN THE MILITARY BURNS VILLAGES AND KILLS ITS INHABITANTS. IT IS ALWAYS THE HMONG CIVILIAN WHO IS JUST TRYING TO SURVIVE WHO SUFFERS THE MOST.

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AS WE SAID, THIS HAS ALL BEEN COMMON KNOWLEDGE FOR A LONG TIME. BUT NOW THERE IS INFORMATION COLLECTED FROM MANY EYE-WITNESSES IN BAN VINAI AS WELL AS THAI OFFICIALS THAT PROVES THAT VANG PAO'S ACTIONS ARE DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR TERRIBLE HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AND POSSIBLY THE DEATHS OF INNOCENT HMONG CIVILIANS. THIS INFORMATION WAS COLLECTED BY A DELEGATION THAT VISITED THAILAND IN APRIL OF 1987.

THE FOLLOWING ARE A FEW EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS BY VANG PAO, HIS APPOINTED LEADERSHIP IN BAN VINAI AND LEADERS OF HIS RESISTANCE FORCES KNOWN AS "NIA HOM" THAT WERE LEARNED OF BY THIS DELEGATION:

***VANG PAO ARRANGED FOR THE THAI MILITARY TO ENTER BAN VINAI, SURROUND CENTER 3, QUARTER 3, ARREST ALL UNDOCUMENTED PEOPLE, THEN TURN OVER TO THE WAITING LAOTIAN MILITARY ONLY THOSE PEOPLE FROM BUILDINGS 38 AND 39.

***VANG PAO DOES NOT WANT ANY MORE HMONG TO COME FROM LAOS TO THAILAND. ACCORDING TO THAI OFFICIALS, VANG PAO PAYS MONEY MONTHLY TO THAI BORDER GUARDS TO HAVE HMONG PUSHED BACK TO LAOS, DESPITE THE FACT THAT MANY HMONG HAVE BEEN KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN KILLED AFTER BEING SENT BACK.

***A CASSETTE TAPE FROM ONE OF THE 1500 HMONG AT NAM POON TO HIS RELATIVES IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA SAYS, "STOP SENDING MONEY TO NIA HOM! THIS MONEY IS JUST COMING TO THAILAND TO KILL US! AFTER WE CAME FROM LAOS TO THAILAND, VANG PAO PAID 200,000 BAHT TO PUSH US BACK TO THE LAO BORDER!"

***HMONG WITNESSES HAVE SEEN HMONG LEADERS FROM BAN VINAI OR THE RESISTANCE FORCES PRESENT WHEN HMONG WERE BEING PUSHED BACK TO LAOS.

***ANY HMONG WHO ARE HIDING IN BAN VINAI AND ARE WITHOUT DOCUMENTS ARE ASKED TO REGISTER WITH VUE MAI'S OFFICE. IF THEY DO NOT AGREE TO JOIN THE RESISTANCE FORCES, THEIR NAMES AND THE ADDRESS OF THE FAMILY THAT IS PROTECTING THEM ARE GIVEN TO THAI MILITARY OFFICERS WHO DEMAND "EXTORTION MONEY" IF FAMILIES WANT TO BE ALLOWED TO STAY IN THE CAMP. THIS MONEY IS THEN REPORTEDLY SPLIT WITH VUE MAI'S OFFICE. FAMILIES WHO CAN NO LONGER PAY ARE TAKEN TO JAIL IN PAK CHOM.

THE DELEGATION

THE PURPOSE OF THE APRIL DELEGATION TO THAILAND WAS TO INVESTIGATE THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE MARCH 15 FORCED REPATRIATION FROM BAN VINAI. ACCOMPANIED BY A POLICE OFFICIAL FROM BANGKOK, THE DELEGATION VISITED A HIGH GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL IN LOEI PROVINCE (WHO REQUESTED THAT HIS NAME AND TITLE NOT BE MENTIONED.) THIS OFFICIAL STATED THAT WHILE THE ORDER FOR THE REPATRIATION CAME FROM BANGKOK, THE PERSON WHO DETERMINED THAT THE PEOPLE IN BUILDINGS 38 AND 39, CENTER 3, QUARTER 3 SHOULD BE ARRESTED AND SENT BACK TO LAOS WAS VANG PAO.

THE RAID ON BAN VINAI

AT 3:00 AM ON MARCH 15, 1987, APPROXIMATELY 200 THAI BORDER POLICE AND 80 THAI MILITARY WHO GUARD THE REFUGEE CAMP ENTERED BAN VINAI AND SURROUNDED CENTER 3 QUARTER 3. AT 4:30 AM, THEY BEGAN ANNOUNCING OVER THE LOUDSPEAKERS FOR PEOPLE NOT TO BE AFRAID, THAT THEY HAD CAPTURED SOME "COMMUNISTS" AND PEOPLE WERE JUST TO STAY CALM.

AT 6:30 AM, THE MILITARY BEGAN GOING INTO THE HOUSES IN QUARTER 3 AND CHECKING IDENTITY CARDS. ANYONE WITHOUT THEIR "BV CARD" WAS DETAINED. ONE RECENTLY MARRIED YOUNG WOMAN AND HER CHILD HAD LEFT THEIR BV CARDS AT HER MOTHER'S HOUSE. THE MILITARY WOULD NOT WAIT FOR SOMEONE TO RETRIEVE THEIR PROOF OF REFUGEE STATUS; THE YOUNG WOMAN, XIA VANG, AND HER CHILD WERE AMONG THE 38 SENT BACK TO LAOS.

CONTRARY TO SOME REPORTS THAT THE REPATRIATED PEOPLE WERE HIDING GUNS OR DRUGS, WITNESSES REPORTED THAT WHILE THE MILITARY SEARCHED THE HOUSES THOROUGHLY, THEY FOUND NOTHING IN ANY WAY SUSPICIOUS OR INCRIMINATING.

WHILE 108 PEOPLE WERE DETAINED, ONLY THOSE FROM BUILDINGS 38 AND 39 WERE LOADED INTO A TRUCK AND TURNED OVER TO THE LAO MILITARY. THIS PARTICULAR TRUCK BELONGED TO THE HMONG LEADER OF THE CAMP, VUE MAI.

VUE MAI HAD HAD A GUEST IN HIS HOUSE THE NIGHT BEFORE, LEE TOU PAO, ONE OF THE LEADERS OF NIA HOM. LEE TOU PAO ALMOST NEVER SPENT THE NIGHT IN BAN VINAI. AT 4:00 AM, THE TWO LEADERS LEFT THE CAMP, LEAVING INSTRUCTIONS FOR SOMEONE TO GIVE THE KEYS FROM VUE MAI'S TRUCK, LICENSE NUMBER 802302, TO THE THAI SOLDIERS.

PAK CHOM JAIL

THE OTHER PEOPLE ARRESTED ON MARCH 15 WERE SENT TO THE JAIL IN PAK CHOM.

EVERY DAY, MORE UNDOCUMENTED PEOPLE WHO CAN NO LONGER PAY THEIR EXTORTION MONEY TO THE THAI SOLDIERS ARE ALSO SENT TO PAK CHOM. THE THAI SOLDIERS CLAIM THAT THEY ARE TOLD WHO TO COLLECT MONEY FROM BY THE HMONG LEADERSHIP IN BAN VINAI AND THAT THEY MUST SPLIT THE MONEY THEY COLLECT WITH VUE MAI'S OFFICE. THE SOLDIERS POINT OUT THAT THEY WOULD NOT KNOW WHICH PEOPLE WERE ILLEGALLY IN THE CAMP UNLESS THEY WERE TOLD. THE MILITARY GENERALLY DO NOT GO THROUGH THE CAMP ASKING EVERYONE FOR THEIR BV CARDS. HOWEVER, MOST OF THE UNDOCUMENTED PEOPLE DO REGISTER WITH VUE MAI'S OFFICE.

CHONG CHAO YANG HAD ESCAPED FROM LAOS WITH HIS WIFE AND FIVE CHILDREN WHEN THEIR VILLAGE WAS BURNED BY VIETNAMESE AND PHATET LAO SOLDIERS. IT

WAS EARLY IN MARCH WHEN HE COULD NO LONGER PAY THE MONEY DEMANDED BY THE THAI SOLDIERS AND WAS TAKEN TO PAK CHOM. HIS COUSIN WENT TO PAK CHOM LATE IN MARCH TO PAY THE BRIBE TO GET HIM OUT OF JAIL, WHICH IS THE NORMAL SYSTEM IN THAILAND. HOWEVER, THIS TIME THE COUSIN WAS TOLD THAT SINCE CHONG CHAO HAD BEEN ARRESTED AT THE ORDERS OF THE HMONG LEADERS IN THE CAMP, ONE OF THOSE LEADERS WOULD HAVE TO COME AND SIGN FOR HIS RELEASE.

THERE IS ONE MORE PIECE OF EVIDENCE THAT DEFINITELY PROVES THAT VANG PAO KNEW THAT THE REPATRIATION WAS GOING TO TAKE PLACE BEFORE IT HAPPENED. IN FRESNO ON MARCH 13, VANG PAO HAD A MEETING WITH LEADERS WHO HAD SUPPORTED HIM, ESPECIALLY WITH DONATIONS. HE GAVE A REPORT AS TO WHAT HAD BEEN DONE WITH THE MONEY THAT HAD BEEN COLLECTED, INCLUDING \$200 MEMBERSHIP FEES. HE REPORTED THAT THE RESISTANCE HAD ALREADY BOUGHT NEW GUNS AND THAT THOSE WERE TO BE DELIVERED ON THAT DAY. THEN VANG PAO INFORMED THIS GROUP OF HMONG LEADERS THAT SOON OFFICIALS WOULD BE "ARRESTING 32 PEOPLE WHO HAD BEEN 'COMMUNISTS' FOR 30 YEARS AND WHO WERE NOW HIDING OUT IN BAN VINAI". THIS WAS TWO DAYS BEFORE THE REPATRIATION.

THE REPATRIATED PEOPLE

WHO WERE THESE 38 PEOPLE WHO WERE FORCIBLY TAKEN OUT OF BAN VINAI REFUGEE CAMP AND TURNED OVER TO THE LAOTIAN MILITARY? WERE THEY REALLY "COMMUNISTS" AS VANG PAO DECLARED? WERE THEY "RESISTANCE FIGHTERS" AS THE THAI GOVERNMENT HAS CLAIMED? THE ANSWER IS NONE OF THE ABOVE.

IN THE FIRST PLACE, 20 OF THEM WERE CHILDREN... OBVIOUSLY NEITHER COMMUNISTS NOR RESISTANCE FIGHTERS. AT LEAST FOUR OF THE HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS HAD FOUGHT WITH VANG PAO'S US-BACKED SECRET ARMY FROM 1962 UNTIL THE FALL OF THE COUNTRY IN 1975. THEY THEN PROVIDED FOOD FOR NIA HOM FORCES FROM 1982 TO EARLY 1986. (WHILE THEY PROVIDED FOOD, THEY WERE NOT INVOLVED IN FIGHTING WITH THE RESISTANCE FORCES.) VANG PAO'S CALLING THESE PEOPLE "COMMUNISTS" WAS CLEARLY A LIE AND AN INSULT TO ALL FORMER HMONG SOLDIERS.

TO UNDERSTAND THE REASON THAT VANG PAO WANTED THESE 38 PEOPLE SENT BACK TO LAOS, WE MUST LOOK AT WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO THEM SINCE THE END OF THE WAR. THEY HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO ESCAPE TO THAILAND AND HAD GONE BACK TO THEIR MOUNTAINS TO FARM IN 1975. ON FEBRUARY 17, 1976, GOVERNMENT FORCES MOVED 73 FAMILIES TO THE FLATLANDS AND SETTLED THEM INTO THREE VILLAGES, THE LARGEST OF WHICH WAS NAN KANG.

ON AUGUST 7, 1982, VANG BEE, A FORMER PILOT AND AN OFFICER IN THE RESISTANCE, CAME TO NAN KANG. HE TOLD THE LEADERS OF THE THREE VILLAGES THAT HIS TROOPS NEEDED RICE. IF THEY WERE TO LOSE THE WAR, HE PROMISED TO TAKE THEM ALL TO THAILAND AND TO THE UNITED STATES. TWO OF THE LEADERS AGREED.

ON AUGUST 13, 1983, VANG BEE RETURNED TO NAN KANG WITH THE FORMER LAOTIAN GENERAL, THONG LIT TO NEGOTIATE AGAIN FOR MORE SUPPLIES OF RICE FROM FIVE VILLAGES IN THE AREA. HE PROMISED THAT WHEN THEY HAD REGAINED CONTROL OF LAOS, ALL OF THESE LEADERS WHO AGREED TO HELP WOULD BE GIVEN POSITIONS OF LEADERSHIP IN THE NEW LAOTIAN GOVERNMENT AND AGAIN, THAT IF THE WAR WAS FINALLY LOST, EVERYONE WOULD BE TAKEN TO THE U.S. THIS TIME SIX LEADERS SIGNED THE AGREEMENT. THEY WERE DESIGNATED AS GROUP #62. THESE VILLAGES PROVIDED RICE TO NIA HOM UNTIL FEBRUARY 21, 1986.

THE MASSACRE AT NAN KANG

ON FEBRUARY 21, 1986, THE NIA HOM RESISTANCE FORCES ATTACKED THE VEHICLE OF A LOCAL LAOTIAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL ABOUT 30 MINUTES WALK FROM NAN KANG. THE BROTHER OF THE OFFICIAL WAS KILLED ALONG WITH TWO HMONG PASSENGERS WHO WERE BEING TRANSPORTED TO THE HOSPITAL; NINE OTHER PEOPLE WERE INJURED.

ON FEBRUARY 24, 1000 VIETNAMESE TROOPS AND 100 LAOTIAN TROOPS SET UP CAMP NEAR NAN KANG. THEY DISCOVERED SMALL GRAIN STORAGE SHELTERS THAT HAD BEEN BUILT OUTSIDE THE VILLAGES TO TRANSFER RICE TO NIA HOM. FIVE LEADERS WERE ARRESTED, INTERROGATED OVERNIGHT, THEN TAKEN OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE AND KILLED.

ON MARCH 21, 1986, THESE TROOPS ATTACKED THE THREE VILLAGES, SETTING THEM ON FIRE. THERE WERE 42 PEOPLE KILLED-- MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN-- AND MOST OF THE HOUSES AND RICE STORAGE SHELTERS WERE DESTROYED.

SURVIVORS ESCAPED TO THE FOREST ALONG WITH PEOPLE FROM TWO NEARBY VILLAGES WHO WERE ALSO TERRIFIED BY THE MASSACRE. IN ALL, THERE WERE 187 FAMILIES--1076 PERSONS--HIDING TOGETHER IN THE FOREST. DURING THE FOLLOWING MONTH, THE MILITARY FLEW OVER IN HELICOPTERS AND ANNOUNCED THROUGH LOUDSPEAKERS THAT IT WAS NOW SAFE TO RETURN TO THE VILLAGES. SOME DID RETURN, ESPECIALLY WOMEN AND CHILDREN, AND SOME JUST WENT TO BRING SUPPLIES BACK TO THE FOREST.

UNDER THE LAOTIAN GOVERNMENTAL SYSTEM, EVERYTHING IS COUNTED AND LOGGED. IT WAS ASCERTAINED THAT THE TROOPS HAD STOLEN THE FOLLOWING ITEMS FROM THE VILLAGES:

46 BUFFALOS	6000 CHICKENS AND DUCKS	60 HOES
33 COWS	200 AXES	
464 PIGS	350 LARGE KNIVE	

ON APRIL 9, 1986, SOLDIERS RETURNED TO THE VILLAGES AND KILLED ANOTHER THREE MEN AND FOUR WOMEN, BRINGING THE TOTAL OF DEAD FROM THE NAN KANG MASSACRE TO 54.

ONE LEADER (WE WILL NOT USE HIS NAME BUT WILL CALL HIM "PHENG" FOR HIS OWN SECURITY) AND 14 OTHER MEN WENT TO A NIA HOM CAMP TO GET GUNS TO AVENGE THE KILLINGS AND DESTRUCTION. WHEN THEY WERE GIVEN ONLY FOUR GUNS, "PHENG" WAS VERY ANGRY. HE ACCUSED NIA HOM OF HAVING NO PLAN, HAVING NO GUNS AND OF CAUSING THE VIET CONG TO DESTROY THEIR VILLAGES.

THE NIA HOM OFFICER POINTED HIS GUN AT "PHENG'S" HEAD, CALLED HIM A COMMUNIST AND SAID HE WAS GOING TO KILL HIM. UNDAUNTED, "PHENG" REMINDED HIM THAT HE HAD SERVED UNDER VANG PAO FROM 1962 UNTIL 1982 AND HAD CONTINUED TO PROVIDE RICE TO THE RESISTANCE FOR FOUR YEARS AFTER THAT. THE SOLDIER DID NOT SHOOT.

SURVIVORS BEGAN ESCAPING IN SMALL FAMILY GROUPS TO THAILAND. SINCE THAILAND WAS NO LONGER ACCEPTING REFUGEES, THEY WERE FORCED TO PAY \$200 PER PERSON TO BE SMUGGLED INTO BAN VINAI. IF THEY CROSSED THE MEKONG RIVER AT NONG KHAI, THEY HAD TO PAY TWICE. OBVIOUSLY, MOST FAMILIES DID NOT HAVE THAT MUCH MONEY WITH THEM. THEY HAD TO PROMISE TO BORROW THE MONEY FROM RELATIVES IN THE CAMP OR IN THE UNITED STATES. BY DECEMBER 9, 1986, 657 SURVIVORS FROM THE NAN KANG VILLAGES WERE IN BAN VINAI.

IN BAN VINAI, "PHENG" WENT TO SEE HIS CLAN LEADER, AND WAS TOLD TO GO AND SEE THE LEADER WHO REPRESENTED THE AREA OF LAOS THAT HE WAS FROM. THIS MAN TOLD HIM THAT ALL OF HIS PEOPLE MUST GO TO "NAM HIA", A NIA HOM RESISTANCE CAMP NEAR CHIENG KHAM. THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN WOULD REMAIN IN THE CAMP AND THE MEN WOULD GO TO FIGHT. "PHENG" AND THE REST OF THE 657 NAN KANG SURVIVORS REFUSED.

IN FACT, "PHENG" AND FOUR OTHER LEADERS DID MORE THAN JUST REFUSE. THEY SPOKE OUT. THEY WROTE A LETTER TO UNHCR EXPLAINING THE SITUATION OF THE MASSACRE THAT HAD FORCED THIS LARGE GROUP TO ESCAPE FOR THEIR LIVES (WITHOUT MENTIONING THE ROLE OF THE RESISTANCE FORCES). THEY SPOKE ABOUT THE EXTORTION OF UNDOCUMENTED PEOPLE IN THE CAMP AND ASKED UNHCR TO HELP PROVIDE THEM PROTECTION AND TO HELP THEM ACQUIRE REFUGEE STATUS.

"PHENG" AND HIS WIFE AND BROTHERS AND SONS AND DAUGHTERS-IN-LAW AND GRANDCHILDREN ALL LIVED IN BUILDINGS 38 AND 39. THE RESIDENTS OF THOSE TWO BUILDINGS WERE THE ONLY ONES AMONG THE UNDOCUMENTED ARRESTED ON MARCH 15 WHO WERE TURNED OVER TO THE LAOTIAN MILITARY. THE EVIDENCE PRESENTED HERE SHOWS VERY CLEARLY THAT THEIR ARREST WAS NOT BECAUSE THEY WERE "COMMUNISTS" AND CERTAINLY WAS NOT BECAUSE THEY WERE "RESISTANCE FIGHTERS". IT WAS IN FACT BECAUSE THEY REFUSED TO SEND THEIR MEN TO FIGHT WITH THE RESISTANCE AND BECAUSE THEY HAD THE COURAGE TO SPEAK OUT ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS BEING PERPETRATED AGAINST HMONG CIVILIANS THAT THEY WERE REPATRIATED.

UNFORTUNATELY, THIS IS NOT THE ONLY EXAMPLE OF PUSH-BACKS OF HMONG WHICH WAS INSTIGATED BY LEADERS FROM NIA HOM AND BAN VINAI.

***IN MARCH 1983, THAI MILITARY PUSHED BACK ABOUT 350 HMONG, REPORTEDLY ON THE ORDERS OF GENERAL THONG LIT. THE LEADERS OF THIS GROUP OF 350 WERE NHIA THONG YANG AND VUE BEE WHO HAD SERVED UNDER VANG PAO FROM 1962-1975 AND HAD CONTINUED WITH THE RESISTANCE UNTIL 1983. BOTH OF THESE MEN HAVE DISAPPEARED SINCE THEIR FORCED RETURN TO LAOS.

***IN MAY 1985, 150 HMONG REFUGEES HAD JUST ARRIVED IN PAK CHOM FROM LAOS. WITNESSES REPORT THAT IT WAS VUE MAI WHO TOLD THE THAI BORDER POLICE TO SEND THEM BACK. REPORTEDLY, ALL BUT 11 PEOPLE WERE SHOT IN LAOS. THE LEADER OF THIS GROUP WAS CHA DANG HER. HE WAS NOT KILLED WITH THE OTHERS BUT TAKEN TO A RADIO STATION TO ANNOUNCE TO THE HMONG IN LAOS NOT TO TRY TO ESCAPE OR THEY WOULD BE KILLED. HE WAS NEVER SEEN OR HEARD FROM AFTER THAT.

***ON MARCH 17, 1987, 97 PEOPLE LEAD BY XIA PHIA YANG AND WITH MANY WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN THEIR GROUP, CROSSED INTO THAILAND AT PAK CHOM. THEY PAID THEIR 30,000 BAHT BRIBE AT A CHECKPOINT BUT WERE SUBSEQUENTLY DETAINED. ACCORDING TO WITNESSES, IT WAS VANG XENG, A LEADER FROM BAN VINAI WHO TOLD THE THAI BORDER POLICE TO PUSH THEM BACK.

***ON MARCH 30, 1987, IT WAS REPORTEDLY VUE MAI WHO ORDERED THE PUSH BACK OF 20 HMONG WHO HAD JUST CROSSED FROM LAOS.

THE PROMISES THAT VANG PAO HAS MADE FOR 12 YEARS HAVE BEEN GREAT. IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN "NEXT YEAR WE WILL CELEBRATE NEW YEAR IN LAOS." IF YOU SUPPORT HIM, WITH YOUR MONEY OR BY CARRYING A GUN, THEN WHEN HE HAS THE COUNTRY BACK, HE WILL BUILD YOU A HOUSE AND GIVE YOU 10 ACRES OF LAND. IF YOU SUPPORT HIM WITH MORE MONEY, THEN YOU CAN BE A MAYOR OR A GOVERNOR OR A CONGRESSMAN. MANY PEOPLE JOKE THAT BY NOW, THERE ARE SO MANY MAYORS AND GOVERNORS AND CONGRESSMEN THAT THERE WILL BE NO FOLLOWERS IN LAOS, ONLY LEADERS.

BUT THESE ARE MINOR THINGS. THESE THINGS CAN BE IGNORED. HOWEVER, WHEN THE ACTIONS OF HMONG LEADERS CAUSE THE PERSECUTION, SUFFERING AND EVEN DEATH OF HMONG SOLDIERS WHO FOUGHT FOR THE FREEDOM OF LAOS AND ALSO OF INNOCENT HMONG CIVILIANS, IT IS TIME FOR ALL OF THE HMONG PEOPLE AND THOSE WHO ARE THEIR FRIENDS TO RAISE THEIR VOICES TOGETHER AND DEMAND THAT IT STOP.

HMONG PEOPLE HAVE NOT FOUGHT FOR 25 YEARS TO NOW SIT QUIETLY WHILE THEIR BROTHERS AND SISTERS AND COUSINS ARE TERRORIZED BY THEIR OWN LEADERS. THIS WILL DO NOTHING TO GET LAOS BACK. BESIDES, IF THIS IS THE WAY THAT LEADERS TREAT PEOPLE NOW, IT WOULD NOT CHANGE IF THE COUNTRY WERE LIBERATED. THE SYSTEM WOULD BE NO BETTER THAN WHAT LAOS HAS NOW

AND ALL OF THIS SUFFERING OF SO MANY THOUSANDS FOR SO MANY YEARS WOULD HAVE BEEN FOR NOTHING.

THE CONCERN NOW MUST BE FOR THE HMONG PEOPLE IN REFUGEE CAMPS IN THAILAND --BOTH DOCUMENTED AND UNDOCUMENTED-- AND FOR THOSE REFUGEES STILL FLEEING PERSECUTION IN LAOS.

WHAT MUST BE DONE

***THE HMONG COMMUNITY IN THE UNITED STATES MUST DEMAND A CHANGE OF THE CORRUPT LEADERSHIP IN BAN VINAI AND DEMAND THAT BAN VINAI AND CHIENG KHAM BE STRICTLY CAMPS FOR THE PROTECTION OF REFUGEES, NOT CAMPS WITH GUNS AND POLITICS FROM WHICH RESISTANCE MOVEMENTS ARE DIRECTED.

SINCE SO MANY THOUSANDS OF HMONG IN THE UNITED STATES ARE NOW AMERICAN CITIZENS, EITHER BY BIRTH OR NATURALIZATION, -- NOT TO MENTION THE FACT THAT THE HMONG ARE STILL A TARGET OF PERSECUTION IN LAOS BECAUSE OF THEIR SERVICE TO THE UNITED STATES DURING THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN WAR --FOR THESE REASONS, IT IS APPROPRIATE THAT THE HMONG PEOPLE ALSO TURN TO THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT TO ASK FOR HELP IN PROTECTING THE LIVES AND HUMAN RIGHTS OF THEIR RELATIVES IN THAILAND AND LAOS.

HMONG PEOPLE ALL OVER THE UNITED STATES ARE SIGNING THIS LETTER OF CONCERN AND THIS REQUEST FOR HELP FROM THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT.

THE FOLLOWING ASSISTANCE IS RESPECTFULLY REQUESTED:

***TO WORK WITH UNHCR AND THE THAI GOVERNMENT TO OBTAIN REFUGEE STATUS FOR THE UNDOCUMENTED PEOPLE IN BAN VINAI AND CHIENG KHAM REFUGEE CAMPS.

***TO GUARANTEE TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THAILAND THAT THE UNITED STATES WILL RESETTLE AT LEAST 10,000 HMONG PER YEAR AS REQUESTED BY THE THAI AMBASSADOR AND THEN TO NEGOTIATE WITH THAILAND TO ASSURE THAT FIRST ASYLUM IS PRESERVED AND THAT THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE REFUGEES ARE PROTECTED. THIS WOULD INCLUDE THE CESSATION OF EXTORTION, PUSH-BACKS AND FORCED REPATRIATION.

***TO CONDEMN THE EXPLOITATION AND PERSECUTION OF HMONG CIVILIANS BY VANG PAO, VUE MAI AND OTHERS INVOLVED IN THE RESISTANCE FORCES AND TO DEMAND THAT ALL SUCH ACTIONS STOP.

***TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO THE HMONG COMMUNITY AT LARGE IN ORDER TO BRING ABOUT A CHANGE IN LEADERSHIP IN BAN VINAI AND ALSO THE DEMILITARIZATION OF BAN VINAI AND CHIENG KHAM REFUGEE CAMPS

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***TO INFORM THE HMONG CIVILIANS IN BAN VINAI THAT VANG PAO DOES NOT HAVE THE SUPPORT OF THE US GOVERNMENT OR THE CIA. WHILE IT HAS BEEN REPORTED ON "60 MINUTES" AND ELSEWHERE THAT THE FORMER AMERICAN GENERAL JOHN SINCLAUB IS SUPPORTING LAOTIAN RESISTANCE FORCES, IT IS IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THAT HE IS DOING THIS AS A PRIVATE CITIZEN. HE IS NO LONGER IN THE MILITARY AND HE DOES NOT REPRESENT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT. THEREFORE, IF HE IS GIVING SUPPORT, IT WILL ALWAYS BE LIMITED. ANYONE WHO HAS TALKED TO ANY OF THE NIA HOM SOLDIERS AND HEARD THEM TALK ABOUT THE OLD GUNS THEY USE THAT ARE LEFT FROM BEFORE 1975 AND DON'T EVEN SHOOT HALF THE TIME MUST KNOW THAT VANG PAO DOES NOT HAVE U.S. GOVERNMENT SUPPORT. THEREFORE, IT IS IMPORTANT TO ASSURE THE HMONG CIVILIANS IN BAN VINAI THAT THEY HAVE THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE FOR THEMSELVES WHETHER OR NOT TO APPLY FOR RESETTLEMENT TO A THIRD COUNTRY.

POSTSCRIPT

ON MAY 4, 1987, YONG ZOUA CHA WROTE A LETTER TO HIS BROTHER IN FRESNO. IN IT HE TOLD THAT THE HMONG PRESIDENT OF BAN VINAI (AS HE CALLED HIM) HAD SENT FOR HIMSELF, "PHENG" AND ONE OTHER LEADER FROM BAN KANG PLUS TWO OTHER LEADERS OF GROUPS OF UNDOCUMENTED PEOPLE FROM OTHER PARTS OF LAOS. "PHENG" HAD REFUSED TO GO, BUT THE OTHER FOUR WENT TO THIS MEETING. THEY WERE TOLD BY THE "HMONG PRESIDENT" (WHO WE MUST ASSUME IS VUE MAI) THAT NO ONE IN THEIR GROUP MUST APPLY FOR REFUGEE STATUS (A BV NUMBER) OR THEY WILL BE KILLED BY "THAI SOLDIERS".

ON MAY 11, 1987, ONE OF THE FIVE LEADERS, YONG ZOUA CHA, WENT TO THE HOPITAL TO VISIT HIS WIFE WHO WAS ILL. HE WAS SITTING NEXT TO AN OPEN WINDOW BY HER BED WHEN HE WAS SHOT WITH A 12-GAUGE SHOTGUN AT VERY CLOSE RANGE. HE DIED IMMEDIATELY.

YONG ZOUA CHA HAD BEEN BORN ON MAY 2, 1935 AND HAD WORKED SINCE HIS TRAINING IN THE EARLY 1960'S BY U.S. OFFICIALS AS A TEACHER IN LAOS. FRIENDS SAY THAT HE WAS A VERY GOOD MAN, UNAFRAID TO STAND UP FOR WHAT HE BELIEVED IN. IT SEEMS THAT HIS RELATIVES KNOW WHO KILLED HIM BUT ARE NOT WILLING TO SAY AT THE MOMENT. MANY PEOPLE IN BAN VINAI ARE TERRORIZED.

VANG PAO'S BRUTALITY AND WILLINGNESS TO KILL SOMEONE ON THE SLIGHTEST PROVOCATION WERE WELL KNOWN DURING THE WAR. THAT HAS NOT CHANGED. IN JANUARY 1981, VANG PAO VISITED BAN VINAI WHERE HE HAPPENED TO SEE NAO TONG YANG WHO HAD WORKED VERY CLOSELY WITH HIM DURING THE WAR. NAO TONG COMPLAINED TO VANG PAO SAYING, "WHY HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN ME AFTER ALL I DID FOR YOU? WHY IS IT THAT YOU NEVER SEND ANY MONEY FOR MY FAMILY?" ON JANUARY 21, 1981, NAO TONG WAS TAKEN OUT OF BAN VINAI BY TWO THAIS AND TAKEN TO ONE OF VANG PAO'S RESISTANCE CAMPS. THERE, ACCORDING TO WITNESSES, HE WAS BEATEN TO DEATH BY FIVE HMONG MEN, AMONG THEM VUE MAI, XIONG LENG XIONG AND MEN FROM THREE OTHER CLANS, A YANG, A MOUA AND A VANG. THE HMONG REFUGEES IN BAN VINAI HAVE GOOD REASON TO BE TERRORIZED.