



# Intelligence Information Cable

● ROUTINE

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CITE

DIST 29 FEBRUARY 1972

APPROVED FOR RELEASE  
DATE: SEP 2001

COUNTRY : NORTH VIETNAM/SOUTH VIETNAM

DOI : LATE 1968 - NOVEMBER 1970

SUBJECT :

1. OBSERVATION OF U.S. POW'S WALKING UNGUARDED IN HANOI IN LATE 1968 AND UNDER GUARD IN SOUTH LAOS IN 1969
2. ACCOUNT OF U.S. SON TAY PRISON RAID BY FORMER SON TAY RESIDENT

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(b) (3)  
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ACQ : LAOS, VIENTIANE (28 JANUARY-21 FEBRUARY 1972)

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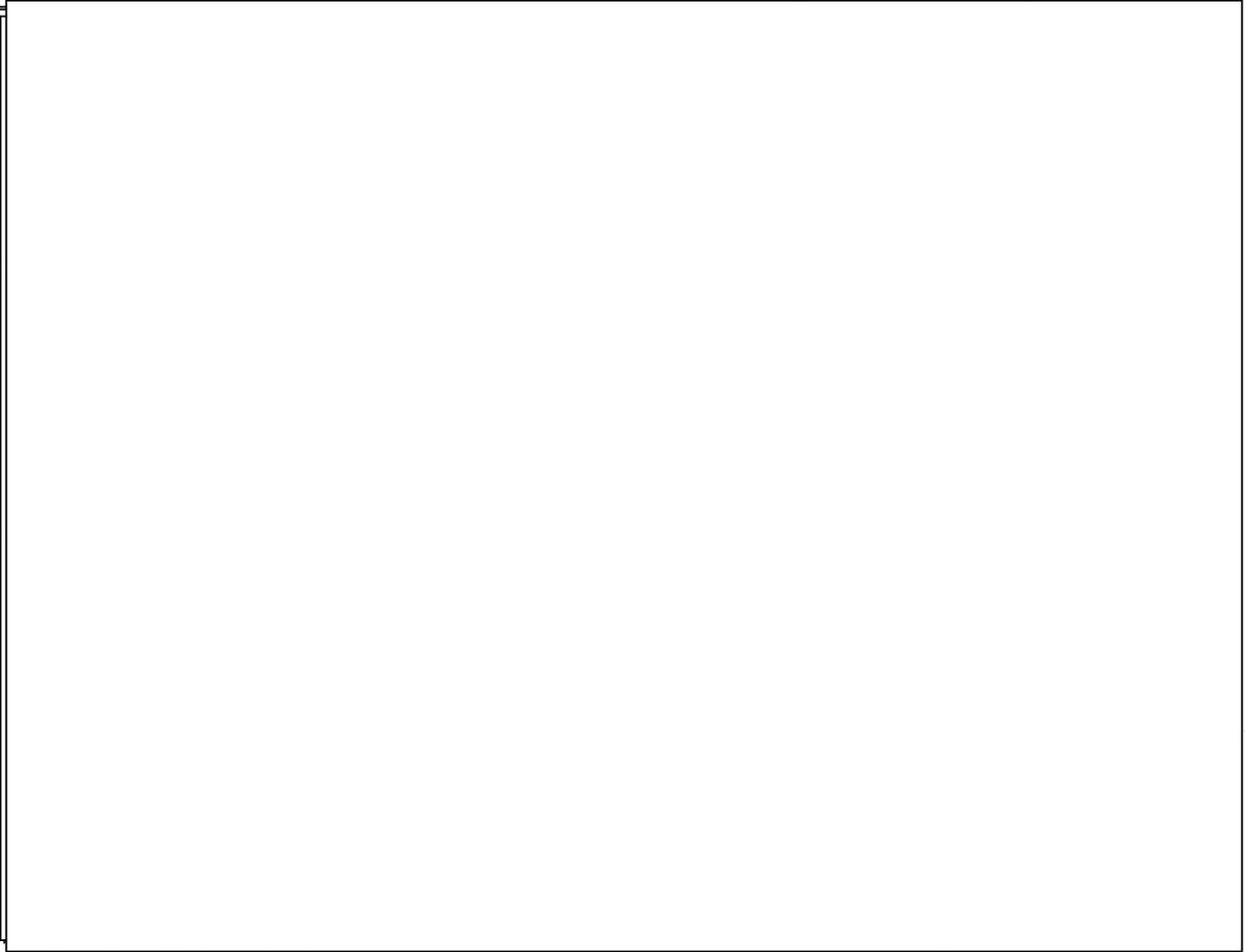
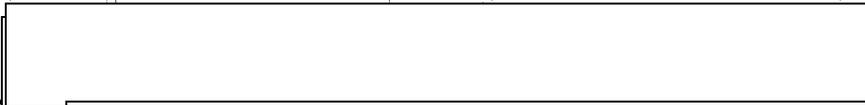
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SUMMARY: NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY SERGEANT 

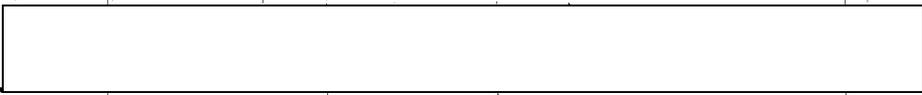
OBSERVED SEVEN AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR WALKING UNGUARDED NEAR A PARK IN HANOI IN LATE 1968. BYSTANDERS SAID THE PRISONERS WALKED IN THE SAME AREA AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK. DURING THE FALL OF 1969 SERGEANT  SAW FIVE OR SIX AMERICAN POW'S AND ABOUT 30 SOUTH VIETNAMESE POW'S ALONG AN INFILTRATION TRAIL ABOUT A DAY'S

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[REDACTED]

WALK EAST OF MUONG PHINE, LAOS. THE MEN WERE TIED WITH ROPES AND WERE UNDER NVA GUARD. A MECHANIC OF THE NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY 968TH GROUP WHO FORMERLY LIVED IN SON TAY, NORTH VIETNAM, SAID IN MID-JANUARY 1972 THAT TRUCKS CARRIED PRISONERS AWAY FROM THE SON TAY PRISON ABOUT SIX HOURS PRIOR TO THE U.S. RAID. HE LATER LEARNED THAT THE PRISONERS WERE TAKEN TO HA BAC. END SUMMARY.

1. SEVEN CAUCASIANS, IDENTIFIED BY BYSTANDERS AS UNITED STATES PILOTS BEING HELD AS PRISONERS OF WAR (POW), WERE OBSERVED BY NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY (NVA) SERGEANT [REDACTED] WALKING IN THE PHO TRANG TIEN SECTION OF HANOI DURING LATE 1968. THE SEVEN MEN WERE IN TWO SEPARATE GROUPS OF FOUR AND THREE MEN EACH AND THEY SPENT ABOUT 15 MINUTES WALKING ON A STREET WHICH BORDERED A PARK SURROUNDING THE HO HOAN KIEM LAKE. BYSTANDERS SAID THAT THE PRISONERS WALKED IN THE SAME AREA ABOUT ONCE A WEEK.

2. [REDACTED] COULD NOT REMEMBER THE EXACT DATE HE SIGHTED THE MEN, ONLY THAT IT WAS AFTER THE U.S. BOMBING HALT IN 1968. HE DESCRIBED THE PHO TRANG TIEN SECTION OF HANOI AS PRIMARILY A BUSINESS DISTRICT WITH THREE-AND FOUR-STORY BUILDINGS.

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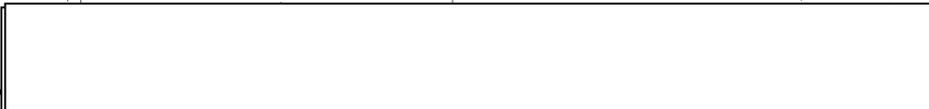
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3. THE CAUCASIANS HAD SHAVED HEADS AND WORE WHITE SHIRTS AND WIDE-LEGGED TROUSERS OF A VERY COARSE MATERIAL. THEY WORE WHITE SOCKS AND CANVAS SHOES, MOST OF WHICH WERE WHITE, ALTHOUGH ONE OR TWO PAIRS WERE BLACK. THE MEN WERE NOT SHACKLED NOR DID THERE APPEAR TO BE ANY GUARDS ACCOMPANYING THEM. OTHER THAN THEIR SHAVED HEADS, CLOTHING AND SOMBER EXPRESSIONS, THE MEN EXHIBITED NO ABNORMAL CHARACTERISTICS.

4. SERGEANT  ALSO OBSERVED FIVE OR SIX AMERICAN POW'S ON 30 SEPTEMBER OR 1 OCTOBER 1969 WHILE HE WAS INFILTRATING INTO LAOS ALONG A TRAIL NEAR BAN TUOY (UNLOCATED), APPROXIMATELY ONE DAY'S WALK EAST OF MUONG PHINE (XD 0927), LAOS.

 SAID HE ASSUMED THE MEN WERE U.S. POW'S FROM THEIR FAIR HAIR AND COMPLEXIONS AND FROM THEIR UNIFORMS, WHICH BORE NO INSIGNIA BUT WHICH RESEMBLED U.S. UNIFORMS WITH WHICH  WAS PREVIOUSLY FAMILIAR. THE AMERICANS WERE IN THE COMPANY OF ABOUT 30 SOUTH VIETNAMESE POW'S, ONE OF WHOM ASKED A MEMBER OF  GROUP HOW MUCH FARTHER IT WAS TO NORTH VIETNAM. NVA SOLDIERS GUARDED THE GROUP.

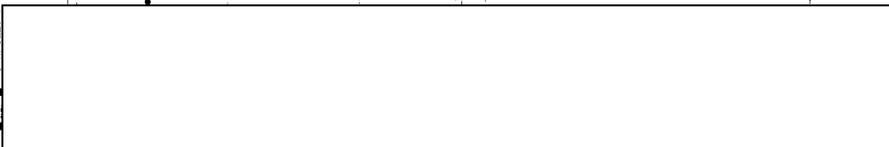
5. ALL OF THE PRISONERS LOOKED TIRED BUT THE AMERICANS APPEARED STRONGER THAN THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE. THE AMERICANS WERE ALL TIED TO ONE ROPE AND THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE WERE TIED

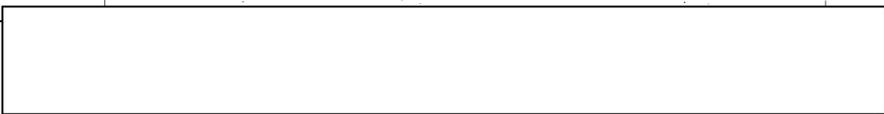
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IN GROUPS OF FIVE TO SEPARATE ROPES, WHICH WERE ATTACHED TO ONE WRIST OF EACH MAN WITH ABOUT THREE METERS BETWEEN MEN. THE AMERICANS WERE DRESSED IN BOTH PLAIN GREEN AND CAMOUFLAGED U.S. TYPE SHIRTS AND TROUSERS AND HAD U.S. TYPE PACKS ON THEIR BACKS. SOME OF THE AMERICANS WORE COMBAT BOOTS BUT OTHERS, APPARENTLY SUFFERING FROM BLISTERED FEET, CARRIED THEIR BOOTS TIED TO THEIR PACKS. THEY HAD TUBES OF MATERIAL SLUNG AROUND THEIR NECKS, WHICH [REDACTED] BELIEVED CONTAINED RICE.

6. AN NVA MECHANIC NAMED [REDACTED] NEWLY ASSIGNED TO THE NVA 968TH GROUP, SAID IN MID-JANUARY 1972 THAT HE HAD BEEN A RESIDENT OF SON TAY, NORTH VIETNAM, AT THE TIME OF THE U.S. RAID TO FREE POW'S THERE AND THAT TRUCKS HAD TAKEN THE POW'S AWAY FROM THE PRISON ABOUT SIX HOURS BEFORE THE RAID. [REDACTED] SAID THAT WHEN HELICOPTERS LANDED AT THE PRISON DURING THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT LOCAL RESIDENTS THOUGHT IT WAS AN NVA COMBAT EXERCISE, BUT THEY FLED THE AREA WHEN THE SHOOTING STARTED. [REDACTED] SAID THAT SEVERAL SOLDIERS AND CIVILIANS WERE KILLED. HE LATER LEARNED FROM OTHER RESIDENTS THAT THE POW'S HAD BEEN TAKEN TO HA BAC. ([REDACTED] COMMENT: THE SON TAY PRISON RAID OCCURRED ON 21-22 NOVEMBER 1970.) [REDACTED] SAID HE SERVED NEAR SON TAY FROM 1966-1969 AND HAD HEARD ABOUT THE UNSUCCESSFUL

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[REDACTED]

U. S. RAID. HE SAID HE ASKED [REDACTED] ABOUT THE RAID WHEN HE LEARNED THAT [REDACTED] HAD LIVED IN SON TAY.

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