

EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT
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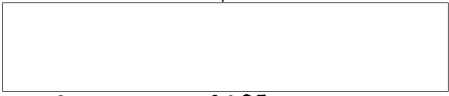
Remarks

STAT

Executive Secretary
30 OCT 85
Date

Executive Registry
85-4272

*Mr. Casper - Exec
as Director of CIA
anyway - you are going to
have to take care of
MIA's - some day
noting the fact that
able to give help to
and about the MIA's
MIA's?*



18 October 1985

Dear Sir:

Because you are a responsible figure in our Government, one who has a non-delegatable obligation to be as fully informed as possible on all major issues, I commend to you the contents of the document enclosed herewith.

It is the most objective, factual treatment I have read of a tragic issue which has placed a great and tragic stain upon the honor and integrity of the United States of America for the entire world to see.

As a fellow citizen who served his country honorably in three wars, and one who loves it as much as I believe you do, I submit that the contents of the enclosed document will provide you with insights into the MIA impasse which have heretofore not been so articulately and knowledgeably expressed.

Once you have read and reflected upon the facts the document brings to light, I pray that you will be motivated to act to redress the terrible wrong done to our fighting men by that repulsive element in our Government which regards those who fought two, no-win, undeclared wars in far-off lands in answer to the call of their Country to be expendable--mere throw-aways--because of a base and venal foreign policy toward Vietnam. Our fathers, brothers, and sons deserve far better than to be betrayed and abandoned by psuedo-intelligentsia in their own Government.

I am sure that those who serve in Washington are aware of the relevant words of a former Chief Executive of the United States who stated, "Nothing ever just happens in Washington, Somebody makes it happen." I pray that you will be that "Somebody."

Respectfully,
J. Donahue
J. Donahue

Enc.

DCI
EXEC
REG

P-100

Memorandum
from
J. C. DONAHUE

A MANIFESTO ON THE INDOCHINA POW-MIA ISSUE

PREFACE

"Accountability" on the POW-MIA issue is a two-way street. It is logical that we look to the Vietnamese to provide an accounting of our missing men. But, within our own country we find that there is no one in the government who is accountable on the issue. No President, no Secretary of Defense, no Secretary of State has stood up and said, "I am accountable for the POW-MIA's." Presidents Nixon, Ford and Carter and all their staffs have come and gone and President Reagan is into his fifth year of office, and the POW-MIA issue still is unresolved. It remains to be seen if the status of "highest national priority" assigned to the issue by the Reagan Administration will bring any live men home and account for the missing ones, but the results to date suggest that "highest national priority" and "accountability" are two entirely different matters.

It is easy to understand the failure of this country to bring its POW-MIA's home: in the absence of accountability there is no responsibility for resolving the POW-MIA issue. In the absence of responsibility there is no leadership. In the absence of leadership there are no solutions. Despite overwhelming evidence that men are alive and in captivity -- and admissions by the Laotians that they were holding live Americans, none have been brought home. Very simply, this is nothing more than a failure of leadership within our government. Is it any wonder, then, that the POW-MIA issue has languished for so many years?

America must realize that an accounting for the POW-MIA's starts at home. We must demand that the President publically declare his accountability on the issue and that he exercise leadership and assemble the human and financial resources necessary to resolve it.

THE PAST AND THE PRESENT

For the American public to support the government's POW-MIA policies, the government must first have credibility on the issue. There must be honest and unencumbered communication with the public and Congress. To achieve this, we must reconcile the past and understand why and how the issue evolved into what it is today.

A) Servicemen were known to have been left behind in captivity. The Defense and State Departments know this to be a fact. In addition, the Laotians told us so. Why, then, did the State Department and the Defense Department adopt a policy immediately after the war of "There are no Americans alive and in captivity in Southeast Asia"? What was the precedent for this policy and who promulgated it?

At the same time, we must understand that when the State and Defense Departments went on record saying there are no Americans in captivity, this then became official U.S. policy regardless of knowledge to the contrary. Therefore, all efforts -- including the House Select Committee and the Woodcock Commission -- were engineered to promulgate the policy and ignore the fact men were left behind in captivity. In other words, with careers and reputations being at stake in the policy, the efforts of government were turned solely toward its perpetuation and the protection of those involved but not toward an accounting for the POW-MIA's! Presidents were shielded from the evidence and Committees/Commissions affirmed the policy despite the evidence available to them. Again, this helps us understand why the issue has gone unresolved for so many years.

B) The State Department has deliberately and skillfully kept the Central Intelligence Agency out of the POW-MIA issue (the CIA, for example, does not serve on the Interagency Group). All CIA information pertaining to servicemen alive and in captivity is classified "secret". We must remember that the CIA ran the war in Laos (there were no U.S. military forces in Laos) and was heavily involved in Vietnam and Cambodia. The CIA continues to collect intelligence on POW-MIA's. The CIA and the DIA are two entirely separate organizations reporting to different chains of command. DIA does not have unrestricted access to classified CIA data and has no operational or audit capability over the CIA. We cannot allow the CIA to remain outside the POW-MIA issue; the evidence the CIA has on servicemen alive and in captivity unequivocally must be made public. We have nothing to fear from knowing the truth.

C) Many tens of thousands of refugees came out of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia before there was any debriefing effort. The Defense and State Departments admit this. For many years (1975-1980, for example) the effort to interview Indochinese refugees was pathetically non-existent. After that, it was (and remains) terribly understaffed and underbudgeted. A publicized worldwide campaign must be initiated to alert refugees previously not debriefed to come forth.

D) Refugee sighting reports have been evaluated in totally discretionary fashion against criteria which are virtually impossible to satisfy (a man could be sentenced to die in the U.S. on less evidence than in the refugee evaluations). Furthermore, there has been a clear bias to discredit the refugee reports on the flimsiest technical points. (For example, a refugee's sighting having been discredited because he saw a pilot in captivity 50 kilometers away from where he was shot down 10 years earlier.) Therefore, there must be independent (non-DIA and CIA) and objective re-evaluation of refugee sighting reports.

E) Concerning the servicemen who were POW's and whose bodies have been returned, the autopsy reports -- specifically citing the estimated time (year) of death -- should be made public. If necessary, independent analysis of the remains should be conducted.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

A) The government, notably the State Department, must reorder its priorities. Resolution of the POW-MIA issue is not subordinate to Southeast Asian foreign policy in any manner whatsoever. The missing men are not

expendable in support of the State Department's foreign policy. Their return -- especially those who are alive -- is the highest priority of foreign policy, not normalization of relations with Vietnam, not ASIAN relations, not support of the Cambodian resistance movements, not the defense of Thailand, not relations with the PRC. There is no greater moral imperative than accounting for the men who served their country.

B) The Defense Department and the State Department must publically acknowledge that men were known to have been left behind in captivity.

C) Simultaneously, the State Department and the Defense Department must change their policy to a truthful one, from one of, "We operate on the assumption that at least one serviceman is alive and being held against his will," to one of, "The evidence clearly indicates that servicemen are alive and in captivity." The State Department, the Defense Department and the League must immediately drop their spurious line that we have no proof today men are alive and in captivity. We have proof that they were left behind in captivity when the war ended. We have proof that they have been seen in captivity since then. Therefore, the only logical conclusion is that they are alive and in captivity today. By analogy, I know that my mother was alive in Florida last week because I got a letter from her. Am I to conclude that I have no proof she is alive today and that in the absence of proof I must conclude she is dead? Such reasoning is ludicrous! By the same logic I must believe that no one is alive unless they are in my physical company or on the other end of the telephone to me.

It is clear that the "proof" the government claims it does not have (therefore, it operates on the "assumption" that men are alive in captivity) simply is unobtainable within the DIA's modus operandi. Effectively, this means that the only irrefutable evidence the government will accept is a handshake from one of the POW's in captivity. The absurdity of the government's approach can be easily understood when one realizes that the source of sighting information is refugees and that by definition any information a refugee supplies is many months, if not years out of date. Therefore it cannot be proved even if "all the intelligence resources of the country are focused on the POW-MIA issue" (as the government claims). For example, a refugee who spent ten months getting out of Vietnam or Laos is debriefed and says, "I saw an American eighteen months ago at such-and-such a road crossing". The DIA immediately dismisses this -- even though the refugee passes a polygraph -- because it is unprovable. Of course it is unprovable!! The DIA (or CIA) does not have an agent or any intelligence resource who can verify that the refugee saw an American eighteen months ago at such-and-such a road crossing (if it did, it would have evidence!). The refugee's information is unacceptable as proof because it cannot be proved. In other words, in the eyes of the U.S. intelligence community, if we cannot prove the proof, we have no evidence.

And, we should understand that even if the government does decide to reconnoiter the road crossing (if it can find it) the serviceman obviously is not going to be there. In summary, the government's case on evidence is tautological and unacceptable. It is a perfect example of circular reasoning and only serves to make sure that more men die in captivity unaccounted for.

D) The CIA must be brought out of the closet on Laos. The war in Laos was totally a CIA operation and the CIA is bursting at the seams with intelligence on servicemen in captivity there.

E) We should realize that if the truth were being told by the government on the POW-MIA issue and that if it were taking actions commensurate with the "highest national priority", then there would be no "disinformation" on the issue and we would not have to waste our resources countering "disinformation". We should realize that only the failure of leadership causes disinformation.

F) We must work to reformulate the government's approach to the POW-MIA issue. The Iranian hostage crisis was resolved without an Interagency Group, a House Task Force, a half-dozen Congressional sub-committees, a House Select Committee, several hundred resolutions and innumerable proclamations. So was the recent Beirut hostage crisis. They were resolved because there was accountability and leadership which made the State Department exercise every diplomatic resource imaginable to quickly settle them. At the same time, there was great political mileage realized in resolving them. The Indochina POW-MIA issue (which very much is a hostage crisis) persists because there is no leadership. All these Task Forces, Interagency Groups, Committees, Sub-Committees, proclamations, resolutions, etc. are merely symptomatic of the lack of leadership on the POW-MIA issue. They are not going to resolve the issue. All they will do is put a guarantee on the State Department's efforts to negotiate the return of dead bodies over some period of time. To have the accountability and leadership which will resolve this issue, we must seek the President's accountability in every manner and forum possible. We must bird-dog the President to the point he has no choice other than to bring home the men who are alive. Iran and Beirut prove it can be done.

G) We must all realize that the State Department and the Defense Department have completely buffaloed Congress on the POW-MIA issue to the extent that Congress is impotent. As long as Congress continues to be so cornered by them there is little hope of bringing back the men who are alive. We need a change of faces and a change of policies in the State and Defense Departments. We must have new policy initiatives and must ask the President to dismiss from the issue all the senior State and Defense personnel presently involved.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE VIETNAMESE

A) The U.S. should not be interested in having to "save face" with the Vietnamese on the POW-MIA issue. That is an unnecessary encumbrance. If, however, a full accounting requires a solution which will enable the Vietnamese to save face, then the U.S. must endorse it and pursue it. The Vietnamese have given us every indication that they need a face-saving solution (because they are holding live servicemen), but the State Department appears unable to understand this.

B) If Vietnam's pecuniary demands are reasonable and our criteria for a full accounting will be satisfied, then we should be willing to provide reconstruction and development aid to the Vietnamese.

C) The State Department's approach to the Vietnamese must be changed. The State Department seems completely unaware that the Vietnamese will lie blatantly to achieve whatever objective they seek. Thus, instead of spouting the Vietnamese line that there are no Americans alive and in captivity in Indochina -- which was totally refuted by the repatriation of Bobby Garwood -- the State Department must pursue exactly the opposite approach and publically announce that the evidence proves that the Vietnamese are holding American prisoners.

D) The State Department must come to grips with the objective reality of the situation in Indochina. Vietnam is forcibly resettling Laos and Cambodia with Vietnamese; Ho Chi Minh's dream of an Indochina Federation is now becoming fact. The Cambodian and Laotian governments are just as much puppets to the Vietnamese as Hungary and Poland are to Russia. To negotiate for years to dig up a single crash site in Laos is a shocking waste of resources and is further proof that the State Department will negotiate the POW-MIA issue into oblivion.

POSTSCRIPT

A) We, the concerned American public, must realize that the absence of accountability on the POW-MIA issue has changed the nature of our adversary. He is no longer without; he is within. The State Department has been and remains fully dedicated to not letting the POW-MIA issue interfere with its conduct of foreign policy in Southeast Asia. The unequivocal long-term objective of foreign policy is the normalization of relationships with Vietnam, just as its greatest diplomatic achievement in the past twenty years was the normalization of relationships with China. The State Department simply is not going to allow the POW-MIA issue to get in the way. It will negotiate with the Vietnamese in perfunctory fashion on the POW-MIA issue and involve other nations in the process (e.g., Indonesia), giving the impression that it is making great efforts to account for the men, when all it really is going to do is arrange for remains to be repatriated over some time schedule. This is a necessary step in the normalization process. Meanwhile, all the men who are alive will have died and frustration will have depleted our ranks.

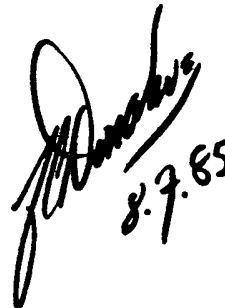
B) We must not let this happen. Indeed, I firmly believe it is time to remove the State Department from the POW-MIA issue and have the President or his special representative handle the diplomatic issues directly.

C) In June, Israel said to the world, "Drop dead", and exchanged 1,200 Palestinian POW's for 3 Israelis!! It, indeed, would be an act of uncommon valor for this country to have the same commitment to those who honorably served it.

D) If there are any "heroes" on the POW-MIA issue then they are, indeed, Messrs. Hendon, Applegate, Dornan and Tighe, whose courage and candor is unassailable. Bobby Garwood is a hero, too; he demonstrated courage far beyond anybody in the White House, the Interagency Group or the State Department on this issue. All of these men should be cited for their outstanding dedication to the truth -- that men are alive and in captivity.

E) We perhaps should exploit the schism which is emerging between the Departments of Defense and State on the POW-MIA issue. Almost exclusively, those who have come forth to tell the truth have been military men, knowing that they (the military) merely jumped when the State Department said "frog" and that their buddies were left behind and are in captivity in Indochina. Many more military men probably will come forth plagued by the consciences and the painful reality of the situation. Indeed, perhaps we should actively encourage military men to speak up, using as examples those who already have chosen to tell the truth.

F) There are millions of people in this country who believe and care and who are willing to help us bring the missing men home. For the National League of Families to shun them and to proclaim that a small group of families is the exclusive voice on the issue is to partake in the same deceit and dishonorable activity as the Departments of State and Defense have done for years. For the League not to welcome these people with open arms and to proclaim that we, too, believe is shameful. The League must sever its umbilical cord to the U.S. government and instead seek the broadest possible support from the American people. We must become the advocate of the men who are alive and in captivity and not their funeral director.



Comments and suggestions on this Manifesto are welcome.

Please send them to:

Dr. J. C. Donahue

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