

October 1972

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COUNTRY NORTH VIETNAM  
DOI DECEMBER 1971  
SUBJECT STATEMENTS OF A VIET CONG REGIONAL COMMANDER IN  
DECEMBER 1971 ON HANOI'S POLICY CONCERNING THE  
EXPLOITATION AND RELEASE OF U.S. PRISONERS OF WAR

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HEADQUARTERS COMMENT: THE FOLLOWING REPORT DESCRIBES WHAT IS ALLEGED TO BE NORTH VIETNAMESE POLICY TOWARD U.S. PRISONERS-OF-WAR AS OF DECEMBER 1971. IT IS AN ACCURATE AND COMPLETE ACCOUNT OF WHAT THE SOURCE TOLD WE CANNOT, OF COURSE, VOUCH FOR THE ACCURACY OF ALL THE DETAILS OF THIS ACCOUNT AS PROVIDED BY THE SOURCE.

SUMMARY: AT A MEETING IN DECEMBER 1971 OF VIET CONG (VC) MILITARY REGION (MR) C-30 CADRES, THE COMMANDER OF THE REGION DISCUSSED HANOI'S POLICY CONCERNING THE EXPLOITATION AND RELEASE OF U.S. PRISONERS OF WAR (POW'S). THE VC COMMANDER SAID THAT HANOI FULLY REALIZES THE VALUE OF KEEPING U.S. POW'S IN CAPTIVITY TO SUPPORT AND SUSTAIN THE PRESSURE TACTICS USED BY THE ANTIWAR SEGMENTS OF THE U.S. PUBLIC AGAINST THE U.S. GOVERNMENT. THE COMMANDER CLAIMED THAT HANOI WOULD CONTINUE TO USE POW'S AS A LEVER TO FORCE WASHINGTON TO ACCEPT HANOI'S CONDITIONS TO END THE WAR. END SUMMARY.

1. SENIOR COLONEL BAY MINH, COMMANDER OF VC MR C-30, HELD A MEETING OF REGIONAL LEADERSHIP CADRES IN DECEMBER 1971 TO DISCUSS NORTH VIETNAMESE POLICY ON THE EXPLOITATION AND RELEASE OF U.S. POW'S AS WELL AS ON OTHER POLITICAL AND MILITARY POLICIES. THE MEETING, HELD NEAR WT596944 IN PREY VENG PROVINCE, CAMBODIA, WAS THE CULMINATION OF A POLITICAL INDOCTRINATION COURSE CONDUCTED BY THE POLITICAL OFFICE OF MR C-30 THAT HAD LASTED SEVERAL WEEKS.

2. ON THE LAST DAY OF THE COURSE, COLONEL MINH TOLD THE

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CADRES THAT THE U.S. POW SITUATION WAS THE GREATEST LEVER THAT HANOI HAS IN OBTAINING ITS DESIRED GOALS IN SOUTH VIETNAM (SVN). HE SAID THAT U.S. POW'S CONSTITUTED A SERIOUS PROBLEM FOR WASHINGTON BECAUSE A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF AMERICAN CITIZENS, PARTICULARLY RELATIVES OF THE PRISONERS, WERE DIRECTLY INVOLVED. PRESSURE ON WASHINGTON WAS MULTIPLIED BY THE INTENSIVE EFFORTS OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WHO WANTED THE POW'S RELEASED AT ANY PRICE.

3. MINH CONTINUED THAT IN EARLIER YEARS HANOI HAD INTENDED TO RELEASE U.S. POW'S OR MAKE AVAILABLE COMPLETE LISTS OF POW'S BUT SOON REALIZED THE BARGAINING POWER THAT COULD BE EMPLOYED BY KEEPING THE POW'S IN CAPTIVITY AND LETTING THE AMERICAN PEOPLE MOUNT PRESSURE ON WASHINGTON. MINH EXPLAINED THAT DURING 1965 AND 1966, HANOI RADIO ANNOUNCED THE NAMES AND SERIAL NUMBERS OF U.S. POW'S WHEN THEY WERE CAPTURED. LATER, FOR FEAR THAT U.S. POW'S MIGHT DIE IN CAPTIVITY AND THEIR DEATHS MIGHT EVENTUALLY BE QUESTIONED BY INTERNATIONAL AUTHORITIES, HANOI CEASED MAKING PUBLIC THE LISTS OF CAPTIVES.

4. ACCORDING TO MINH, HANOI'S CONDITIONS FOR RETURN OF

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ALL POW'S INCLUDE NOT ONLY THE WITHDRAWAL OF ALL U.S. TROOPS, BUT ALSO THE REMOVAL OF ALL TECHNICAL EQUIPMENT, INCLUDING RADAR EQUIPMENT AND INSTALLATIONS, AND OTHER EQUIPMENT THAT U.S. FORCES USE UP TO THE DATE OF WITHDRAWAL. NONE OF THIS EQUIPMENT IS TO BE TURNED OVER TO THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE. THE REMOVAL OF TECHNICAL EQUIPMENT AND THE DISMANTLING OF MILITARY INSTALLATIONS ARE TO ASSURE HANOI OF U.S. INTENTIONS NOT TO RETURN TO SVN, BECAUSE THE WITHDRAWAL OF MANPOWER ALONE WILL NOT CONVINCE HANOI OF WASHINGTON'S PLANS FOR THE FUTURE.

5. MINH TOLD HIS AUDIENCE THAT HANOI WAS SURPRISED THAT U.S. FORCES HAVE BEEN WITHDRAWN STEADILY, BUT IT BELIEVES THAT THE NUMBER OF REMAINING TROOPS AND MILITARY ADVISORS INDICATES WASHINGTON'S COMMITMENT TO SAIGON AND THAT WASHINGTON MIGHT RETURN TROOPS TO SVN IN AN EMERGENCY. HANOI REGARDS THE TROOP WITHDRAWAL AS AN INEVITABLE REACTION OF WASHINGTON TO PRESSURE APPLIED BY ANTIWAR SEGMENTS OF THE AMERICAN PUBLIC.

6. MINH SAID THAT U.S. POW'S MAY BE RELEASED ON A PIECE-MEAL BASIS EVEN AFTER THE WITHDRAWAL OF ALL U.S. TROOPS FROM SVN IF WASHINGTON MAINTAINS A MILITARY ADVISORY ROLE IN SVN. IN ANY CASE, POW'S WILL BE RELEASED TO REPRESENTATIVES OF THE

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OPPOSITION POLITICAL PARTY, ANTIWAR ORGANIZATIONS, OR DIRECTLY TO THEIR FAMILIES. MINH DOES NOT BELIEVE HANOI WOULD EVER DEAL WITH WASHINGTON DIRECTLY FOR THE RELEASE OF POW'S.

7. MINH EXPLAINED THAT A "LIMITED RELEASE" OF POW'S IS APPLICABLE ONLY TO THOSE POW'S WHO HAVE ACCEPTED THE BULK OF COMMUNIST INDOCTRINATION OFFERED BY THEIR CAPTORS. THE MAIN THEMES OF POW INDOCTRINATION INCLUDE THE CONDEMNATION OF THE USELESS (SIC) U.S. BOMBING OF NORTH VIETNAM (NVN) AND THE ABSURDITY AND IRRATIONALITY OF THE U.S. COMMITMENT TO SVN. U.S. POW'S WHO HAVE BEEN RELEASED WERE THOSE HANOI BELIEVED SYMPATHETIC TO ITS CAUSE, THOSE WHO HAVE APPARENTLY ABSORBED THEIR INDOCTRINATION. MINH SAID THAT THE POW'S TO BE RELEASED PRIOR TO COMPLETE U.S. WITHDRAWAL FROM SVN WILL HAVE AN IMPORTANT INFLUENCE ON THE PEOPLE OF THE U.S. WHO, IN TURN, WILL PUT PRESSURE ON WASHINGTON TO ACCEDE TO HANOI'S DEMANDS FOR ENDING THE WAR.

8. MINH CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT UPON THE COMPLETION OF U.S. WITHDRAWAL FROM SVN, THE RELEASE OF POW'S WOULD BE ASSURED BY AN ARRANGEMENT THROUGH INTERNATIONAL AUTHORITIES. FURTHER, WHEN THE WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. TROOPS AND THE SUBSEQUENT RELEASE

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OF U.S. POW'S HAVE BEEN ACCOMPLISHED, THE HANOI AND SAIGON  
GOVERNMENTS WILL DISCUSS THE MUTUAL RELEASE OF SOUTH VIETNAMESE  
AND NORTH VIETNAMESE POW'S. UPON RESOLUTION OF THIS QUESTION,  
A PERMANENT CEASE-FIRE WILL BE ENACTED AND ARRANGEMENTS MADE  
TO ELECT A COALITION GOVERNMENT.

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