

UNCLAS

MOSCOW 33784

C-LAN:

INFO: POLL DAO PMILL ESTL ECONL DCML AMBL CHRON AAUL
ORC

Lasers:

ACTION: PMIL
INFO: AAU PRT1 DCM AMB ACIU POW/MIA YEKAT VLAD ECON
POL EST DOE

DISSEMINATION: PMIL
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: (b)(6)
DRAFTED:
CLEARED:

VZCZCESC699

RR RUEHC RUEKJCS RUHVAAA RUHPHQA RUEHTA RUEHKV
RUEHSK RUAGAMS RUFDMIU RUEKJCS RHHMUNA RUEAHOF RUEKJCS RUEHLN
DE RUEHMO #3784/01 3440901

ZNR UUUUU ZZH

R 090901Z DEC 96

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 8796

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC//USDP:ISA/DPMO//

INFO RUHVAAA/CDR USACILHI HICKAM AFB HI//TAPC-PED-H//

RUHPHQA/CDR JTFFA HONOLULU HI

RUEHTA/AMEMBASSY ALMATY 3729

RUEHKV/AMEMBASSY KIEV 4230

RUEHSK/AMEMBASSY MINSK 1877

RUAGAMS/CINCUNC SEOUL

RUFDMIU/COMDT IES GARMISCH GE//ECMC-DOS-HHD//

RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC//OJCS-PW/MIA/J5//

RHHMUNA/USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI//J01//

RUEAHOF/CDRPERSCOM ALEX VA//DAPC-ZP-TFR//

RUEKJCS/DIA WASHDC (b)(3):10 USC §424

RUEHLN/AMCONSUL ST PETERSBURG 1594

BT

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 MOSCOW 033784

DEPT FOR EUR/ISCA AND EAP

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: KPOW, MOPS, PREL, PHUM, PINR, RS, VN

SUBJECT: JOINT COMMISSION SUPPORT DIRECTORATE-
MOSCOW (JCS-D-MOSCOW) INTERVIEW WITH VIETNAM WAR

VETERAN (b)(6)

1. SUMMARY: ON DECEMBER 3, 1996, JOINT
COMMISSION SUPPORT DIRECTORATE (JCS-D)-MOSCOW TEAM
MEMBERS (b)(6)

(b)(6) INTERVIEWED (b)(6)

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(b)(6)

(b)(6)

HE DESCRIBED IN SOME DETAIL THE OPERATION OF THE GRU "SPETZGRUPPA," WHICH FUNCTIONED THROUGHOUT THE WAR ACQUIRING SAMPLES OF CAPTURED AMERICAN COMBAT EQUIPMENT FOR EXPLOITATION IN THE USSR. THE SPETZGRUPPA HAD NO CONTACT WITH AMERICAN POWS, BUT SOVIET OFFICERS HAD PARTICIPATED IN THE INTERROGATION OF AMERICAN POWS ON TWO OCCASIONS PRIOR TO ZAKHARCHENKO'S ARRIVAL IN HANOI, HE CLAIMED. END SUMMARY.

2. WITNESS RELIABILITY: (b)(6) WAS INITIALLY RELUCTANT TO SPEAK WITH JCSD-MOSCOW. HE HAD SPOKEN PREVIOUSLY WITH SEVERAL U.S. EMBASSY OFFICIALS, AND HE CLAIMED HE HAD NO FURTHER INFORMATION TO SHARE. AS THE INTERVIEW PROCEEDED, HOWEVER, (b)(6) EXPRESSED AN ABIDING PERSONAL INTEREST IN SUPPORTING THE HUMANITARIAN TASK OF ACCOUNTING FOR MISSING U.S. SERVICEMEN, AND DURING THE COURSE OF THE TWO-AND-ONE-HALF HOUR INTERVIEW, HE PROVIDED PREVIOUSLY UNKNOWN DETAILS ABOUT THE SPETZGRUPPA'S MISSION, FUNCTIONS, AND OPERATIONS. HE IS A HIGHLY CREDIBLE AND KNOWLEDGEABLE WITNESS.

3. INTERVIEW DETAILS: (b)(6) CLAIMED HE FOLLOWED THE ISSUE OF AMERICAN POWS IN NORTH VIETNAM VERY CLOSELY DURING HIS FOUR-YEAR TOUR IN HANOI. THE VIETNAMESE CONSIDERED ANYTHING DEALING WITH THE POWS A CLOSELY HELD SECRET AND SHARED LITTLE INFORMATION WITH THE SOVIETS OR THE CHINESE. NEVERTHELESS, (b)(6) CONSIDERED HIMSELF AS KNOWLEDGEABLE AS ANYONE AT THE TIME ABOUT AMERICANS HELD CAPTIVE BY THE VIETNAMESE. HE ALSO CLAIMED TO HAVE BEEN PRESENT AT THE CRASH SITES OF DOWNED AMERICAN AIRCRAFT "SEVERAL TIMES."

3A. (b)(6) CONFIRMED THE EXISTENCE OF A SPETZGRUPPA AT THE SOVIET EMBASSY IN HANOI DURING THE VIETNAM WAR. THE GROUP'S MISSION WAS TO ACQUIRE CAPTURED AMERICAN COMBAT EQUIPMENT FOR TRANSPORT TO THE USSR WHERE IT COULD BE EXPLOITED. HE CLAIMED THE GROUP FUNCTIONED THROUGHOUT THE WAR, STAFFED IN 1965 BY AS MANY AS 20 SPECIALISTS AND DROPPING TO AS FEW AS 4 OFFICERS TOWARD THE END OF THE WAR. THE GROUP'S WORK WAS VERY DIFFICULT FOR 3 REASONS: THE VIETNAMESE DID NOT ALWAYS INFORM THE SOVIETS WHEN THEY ACQUIRED VALUABLE PIECES OF AMERICAN EQUIPMENT; THE

VIETNAMESE DID NOT ALWAYS PERMIT SOVIET ACCESS TO THIS EQUIPMENT; AND CLIMATIC CONDITIONS WERE SUCH THAT QUICK RECOVERY OF EQUIPMENT WAS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT.

3A1. TO GAIN ACCESS TO A CRASH SITE, FOR EXAMPLE, THE SOVIETS HAD TO APPLY TO THE VIETNAMESE FOR PERMISSION TO EXPLOIT THE SITE. BY THE TIME THE SOVIETS ARRIVED, MOST OF THE VALUABLE EQUIPMENT HAD ALREADY BEEN REMOVED TO VIETNAMESE WAREHOUSES. TO ACQUIRE THE MORE LUCRATIVE PIECES OF AMERICAN COMBAT EQUIPMENT, THE SOVIETS USUALLY HAD TO OFFER THE VIETNAMESE NEW SOVIET COMBAT EQUIPMENT IN EXCHANGE FOR THE CAPTURED AMERICAN EQUIPMENT. THE VIETNAMESE TREATED THEIR CHINESE ALLIES IN A SIMILAR FASHION, (b)(6) CLAIMED.

3A2. AS AN EXAMPLE OF THE DIFFICULT CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH THE SPETZGRUPPA OPERATED, (b)(6) RECALLED THE DOWNING OF AN AMERICAN F-4 IN 1970 (HE COULD NOT BE MORE SPECIFIC ON THE DATE) ABOUT 200 KILOMETERS SOUTH OF HANOI. THE SOVIETS BECAME AWARE OF THE DOWNING THE SAME DAY, AND

(b)(6) WENT IMMEDIATELY TO THE VIETNAMESE GENERAL STAFF HEADQUARTERS. WHEN THE VIETNAMESE REFUSED IMMEDIATE SOVIET ACCESS TO THE SITE, (b)(6) THREATENED TO RETURN THE SPETZGRUPPA TO THE USSR IF THE VIETNAMESE DID NOT GRANT ACCESS TO THE CRASH SITE, WHEREUPON THE VIETNAMESE RELENDED. THE SPETZGRUPPA TEAM DROVE TO THE SITE AND CRAWLED THROUGH THICK, INSECT-INFESTED JUNGLE TO REACH THE CRASH SITE, A LARGE IMPACT CRATER FILLED WITH WATER. THE VIETNAMESE GAVE THE SOVIETS PERMISSION TO REMOVE WHATEVER WAS RECOVERABLE FROM THE WRECKAGE. (b)(6) CLAIMED THAT NO BODIES OR EVIDENCE OF THE FATE OF THE CREW WERE FOUND DURING THE EXCAVATION OF THE SITE BY THE SOVIET SPETZGRUPPA.

3A3. (b)(6) DISMISSED THE POSSIBILITY THAT, GIVEN VIETNAMESE NONCOOPERATION, THE SOVIETS MIGHT HAVE SIMPLY "TAKEN" WHAT THE VIETNAMESE WERE NOT WILLING TO GIVE. HE CLAIMED THIS WOULD HAVE BEEN POLITICALLY AND LOGISTICALLY IMPOSSIBLE AND WOULD HAVE CREATED A SERIOUS INCIDENT BETWEEN HANOI AND MOSCOW.

3A4. AMERICAN COMBAT EQUIPMENT OBTAINED BY THE SPETZGRUPPA WAS SENT TO A SPECIAL WAREHOUSE FACILITY IN THE SOVIET UNION, WHERE IT WAS SORTED AND SHIPPED TO THE RESPONSIBLE MINISTRY FOR EXPLOITATION (I.E., AIRCRAFT TO THE SOVIET AIR

FORCE, APCS TO THE GROUND FORCES, ETC).

(b)(6) BELIEVES IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO TRACE THIS EQUIPMENT AND LOCATE IT TODAY. HE DID ACKNOWLEDGE THAT AN AMERICAN APC FROM VIETNAM IS AT THE MUSEUM OF ARMORED TRANSPORTATION.

3A5. (b)(6) CLAIMED IT WAS NOT PART OF THE SPETZGRUPPA'S MISSION TO TRANSPORT AMERICAN POWS FROM SOUTHEAST ASIA TO THE USSR. THE GROUP WAS ONLY INTERESTED IN EQUIPMENT AND MADE NO EFFORT TO ACQUIRE A PILOT FOR EXPLOITATION. HE ASSERTED THAT NO MILITARY OFFICERS, INCLUDING OFFICERS OF THE GRU, WERE INVOLVED IN THIS TYPE OF OPERATION. MOREOVER, (b)(6) CLAIMED HE HAD CLOSE RELATIONS WITH SOVIET OFFICERS OF "OTHER SERVICES" WHO WERE IN HANOI, AND HE KNEW OF NO EFFORT TO TRANSPORT AMERICAN POWS TO THE USSR. (b)(6) WAS CERTAIN THAT AMERICAN POWS COULD NOT HAVE BEEN TRANSFERRED WITHOUT HIS KNOWLEDGE.

3B. (b)(6) CLAIMED THAT THE SPETZGRUPPA DID NOT INTERROGATE AMERICAN POWS IN VIETNAM DURING HIS TOUR OF DUTY THERE. SPECIALISTS FROM THE SPETZGRUPPA ROUTINELY SUBMITTED QUESTIONS TO THE VIETNAMESE THAT THE SPETZGRUPPA WANTED ADDRESSED TO AMERICAN POWS. THESE QUESTIONS WERE SPECIALLY PREPARED FOR INDIVIDUAL POWS (I.E., THE LIST OF QUESTIONS WAS NOT A STANDARD QUESTIONNAIRE) AND USUALLY INVOLVED AMERICAN TACTICS AND TECHNICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF EQUIPMENT. THE QUESTIONS WERE PROVIDED PRIOR TO AN INTERROGATION, BUT ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS WERE PROVIDED BACK TO THE SPETZGRUPPA ONLY RARELY, HE SAID. THESE INTERROGATION PROTOCOLS CONTAINED THE NAME AND RANK OF THE POW AS WELL AS THE AIRCRAFT TYPE THAT HE PILOTED.

3C. ALTHOUGH SOVIET OFFICERS DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE INTERROGATION OF AMERICAN POWS DURING HIS TOUR IN HANOI, (b)(6) DID KNOW OF TWO INCIDENTS PRIOR TO HIS ARRIVAL (1967) WHEN SOVIET OFFICERS WERE PRESENT DURING THE INTERROGATION OF AMERICAN FLYERS. IN THESE CASES, THE ACTUAL INTERROGATION WAS CONDUCTED BY THE VIETNAMESE, HE CLAIMED, BUT THE SOVIET OFFICERS WERE PHYSICALLY PRESENT IN THE ROOM. HE KNOWS OF THESE INCIDENTS FROM READING COPIES OF THE INTERROGATION REPORTS IN MOSCOW, HE SAID. (b)(6) DOES NOT RECALL THE NAME OF THE SOVIET OFFICERS OR THE AMERICAN POWS INVOLVED IN THESE 1967 INTERROGATIONS.

3D. (b)(6) CLAIMS TO HAVE BEEN PRESENT AT

PRESS CONFERENCES WHEN AMERICAN POWS WERE DISPLAYED. ALTHOUGH PRESSED, HE WAS UNABLE TO BE SPECIFIC, FAILING TO PROVIDE THE NUMBER OF SUCH INCIDENTS, DATES, OR DESCRIPTIONS OF THE POWS INVOLVED.

3E. (b)(6) CLAIMED THERE WAS NO WRITTEN POLICY ISSUED BY THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT GOVERNING CONTACT WITH AMERICAN POWS BY SOVIET CITIZENS IN NORTH VIETNAM. HE SAID SOVIET PERSONNEL WERE REQUIRED TO REPORT ANY SUCH CONTACT TO THE SOVIET ATTACHE.

3F. THERE WAS A WRITTEN DOCUMENT, HOWEVER, GOVERNING THE WORK OF THE SPETZGRUPPA. THIS WAS THE PROTOCOL OF THE TREATY BETWEEN THE SOVIET UNION AND NORTH VIETNAM THAT OBLIGATED THE VIETNAMESE TO GIVE UP CAPTURED AMERICAN COMBAT EQUIPMENT TO THE SOVIETS.

4. DIARY/SOUVENIRS/PHOTOGRAPHS: NONE

5. NAMES OF POSSIBLE CONTACTS: WHEN ASKED FOR THE NAMES OF PEOPLE WITH WHOM HE HAD WORKED AT THE EMBASSY IN HANOI, (b)(6) EXPRESSED THE BELIEF THAT PROVIDING THESE NAMES WOULD BE A BETRAYAL. HE SUGGESTED THAT WE CONTACT THE CANADIANS OR SWEDES WHO HAD MISSIONS IN HANOI DURING THE WAR FOR THE LIST OF THE SOVIET EMBASSY STAFF AT THIS TIME.

6. JOINT COMMISSION SUPPORT DIRECTORATE-MOSCOW SENDS. (b)(6)

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