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FM CDR JTF-FA HONOLULU HI/J3/
TO RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASH DC
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RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC/USD/ISA/DPMO/
RUEJSD/USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI/J3/J32/
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CT
CONTROLS
UNCLAS //N03460//
BODY
MSGID/GENADMIN/CJTF-FA/-/DEC/
SUBJ/REPORT OF ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW (OHF00-006):
NGUYEN GIA DANG/
REF/A/MSG/USDAO BANGKOK/190027Z0CT98/
REF/B/MSG/USDAO BANGKOK/230412ZNOV99/
RMKS/1. REFERENCES.
A. REF A IS IIR NUMBER 6 024 0002 98.
B. REF B IS IIR NUMBER 6 024 0024 00.
2. SUMMARY. ON 18 JULY 2000, THE ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM
(OHP) TEAM INTERVIEWED MR. NGUYEN GIA DANG (AKA TU CAM)
IN A CONFERENCE ROOM OF THE DE NHAT (DEEJ NHAATS) HOTEL
IN HO CHI MINH CITY. MR. DANG PROVIDED HEARSAY REGARDING
INCIDENTS INVOLVING THE CAPTURE AND EXECUTION OF FIVE
FOREIGN JOURNALISTS IN TAKEO PROVINCE, CAMBODIA IN MAY
1970, AND THE REPORTED BURIAL OF APPROXIMATELY 10
AMERICAN SERVICEMEN NEAR CHUP, KAMPONG CHAM, CAMBODIA.
HE ALSO PROVIDED INFORMATION REGARDING THE PERIOD OF
KHMER ROUGE (KR) RULE IN CAMBODIA DURING THE MID-TO
LATE 1970'S.
3. DETAILS OF INTERVIEW.
A. PARTICIPANTS.
(1) U.S. CONTINGENT:

UNCLASSIFIED
UNCLASSIFIED

(A) JOINT TASK FORCE-PULL ACCOUNTING (JTF-FA), RESEARCH AND INVESTIGATION TEAM (RIT) LEADER.

(B) STONY BEACH.

(C) JTF-FA DETACHMENT TWO REPRESENTATIVE.

(2) VIETNAM OFFICE FOR SEEKING MISSING PERSONS (VNOsMP) CONTINGENT:
   (A) TRAN BIEN (TRAAN BIEENF), DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE VNOsMP, COMMANDER OF THE MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE MIA AGENCY, TEAM LEADER.
   (B) NGUYEN PHONG SON (NGUYEENX PHONG SOWN), MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SECURITY.
   (C) PHAM VAN KHAI (PHAMJ VAWN KHAIS), MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE.

(3) HO CHI MINH CITY FOREIGN AFFAIRS OFFICE REPRESENTATIVE: NGUYEN HUNG TUAN (NGUYEENX HUNGF TUUANS), MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SECURITY.

B. WITNESS DATA.
   (1) NAME: NGUYEN GIA DANG (NGUYEENX GIA DANGF), (AKA TW CAM).
   (2) DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH: 1924, HANOI.
   (3) CURRENT ADDRESS: 305/95 NGUYEN TRONG TUYEN (NGUYEENX TRONGJ TUYEENR) STREET, WARD 10, PHU NHUAN (PHUS NHUAANJ) DISTRICT, HO CHI MINH CITY.
   (5) CURRENT OCCUPATION: RETIRED.
   (6) FAMILY INFORMATION: MR. DANG HAS SEVEN CHILDREN, FOUR SONS AND THREE DAUGHTERS. AMONG HIS SONS, ONE IS IN THE ARMY, ONE WORKS FOR PUBLIC SECURITY, AND ONE IS A LAWYER. HIS OLDEST SON IS 48 YEARS OLD.

4. BACKGROUND. TU CAM'S NAME HAS SURFACED IN NUMEROUS REPORTS FROM CAMBODIA SINCE THE LON NOL ERA IN CAMBODIA. IN 1972, TU CAM WAS REPORTED TO COMMAND OF A FORCE OF 2400 ETHNIC VIETNAMESE-CAMBODIAN RESIDENTS OPERATING UNDER THE DESIGNATION OF THE 82ND DIVISION IN CENTRAL CAMBODIA. IT IS POSSIBLE THEY WERE ACTUALLY AFFILIATED WITH THE 9TH PAVN DIVISION (REF A). THERE ARE EIGHT UNRESOLVED INCIDENTS INVOLVING 11 US MILITARY PERSONNEL THAT OCCURRED IN THE AREAS WHICH THE 82ND DIVISION WAS ACTIVE. THERE ARE ALSO NINE UNRESOLVED CIVILIAN AND FOREIGN NATIONAL LOSSES IN THOSE SAME AREAS.

UNCLASSIFIED
TU CAM WAS ALSO REPORTEDLY ACTIVE IN NEGOTIATIONS
WITH THE KHMER ROUGE (KR) IN 1976, AFTER THE COLLAPSE
OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM, BUT BEFORE THE OUTBREAK
OF THE CAMBODIA-VIETNAM WAR (REF B).

5. OPENING REMARKS. MR. DANG STRESSED IN HIS
INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT HE NEVER SERVED AS AN ADVISOR
TO THE KR. HE BEGAN WORKING WITH A VOLUNTEER FORCE
OF ETHNIC VIETNAMESE IN CAMBODIA IN 1950 AND LATER
BECAME THE DEPUTY POLITICAL OFFICER FOR THE PAVN 1ST
DIVISION AFTER IT DEPLOYED TO CAMBODIA IN 1970. HE
REMAINED IN THIS CAPACITY UNTIL THE LIBERATION OF THE
SOUTH. FROM 1975 THROUGH 1996, MR. DANG SERVED AS THE
DEPUTY COMMANDER OF A VIETNAMESE UNIT THAT ACTED AS
A LIAISON BETWEEN THE VIETNAMESE CENTRAL COMMITTEE
AND THE KR. THIS UNIT WAS LED BY COMRADE PHAN HIEN
(PHAAN HIEN).

6. MISSING AMERICANS. MR. DANG RECALLED TWO INCIDENTS
WHICH INVOLVED AMERICANS LOST OR CAPTURED IN CAMBODIA
DURING THE WAR YEARS.

A. FIRST INCIDENT: BY 18 APRIL 1970, THE ENTIRE
TUK MEAS REGION (VICINITY VS526790) HAD BEEN LIBERATED.
AT THAT TIME, MR. DANG WAS THE DEPUTY POLITICAL
OFFICER FOR ELEMENTS OF THE PAVN 1ST DIVISION THAT
OPERATED IN THE KIRI VONG (VS726698), ANGKOR CHEY
(VS446974), AND TUK MEAS REGION. HIS UNIT'S AREA OF
OPERATIONS EXTENDED TO THE KAMPOT PROVINCIAL BORDER.
FOLLOWING THE LIBERATION, IN MAY 1970, ELEMENTS OF
THE 410TH BATTALION, PAVN 1ST DIVISION DETAINED A
GROUP OF FIVE TELEVISION JOURNALISTS AT A THREE-WAY
INTERSECTION IN ANGKOR CHEY DISTRICT, TAKEO PROVINCE.
THE GROUP INCLUDED ONE AMERICAN, ALONG WITH SOME
JAPANESE AND AN INDIVIDUAL OF UNKNOWN NATIONALITY.
AT THE TIME, THE JOURNALISTS WERE CAPTURED, MR. DANG
WAS WITH ANOTHER UNIT OPERATING IN THE SOUTHERN TUK
MEAS AREA.

B. AS THE DEPUTY POLITICAL OFFICER FOR THE
DIVISION, MR. DANG WAS DISPATCHED TO THE THREE-WAY
INTERSECTION TO INTERROGATE THESE FIVE PRISONERS,
ARRIVING ON THE SCENE THE FOLLOWING MORNING. UPON
HIS ARRIVAL, MR. DANG LEARNED THAT THE 410TH BATTALION
HAD TURNED THE PRISONERS OVER TO THE KR THE PREVIOUS
AFTERNOON. THE PRISONERS HAD BEEN TURNED OVER PER
INSTRUCTIONS ISSUED BY TA MUT, THE SON-IN-LAW OF TA
MAK. THE GROUP OF KR (UNIT DESIGNATION UNKNOWN), LED
THE FIVE PRISONERS OFF TO THE NORTH TOWARD NUOL REAS
MOUNTAIN (NFI).

C. A FEW MONTHS AFTER THIS INCIDENT OCCURRED,
MR. DANG SPOKE WITH TA MUT AND LEARNED THE FIVE
JOURNALISTS HAD ALL BEEN EXECUTED. HE DID NOT ASK
ABOUT THE DISPOSITION OF THEIR REMAINS FOLLOWING THE
EXECUTIONS. HE ADDED, THAT THERE WAS NO POLICY THAT
HE KNEW OF FOR THE KR TO REPORT ANYTHING REGARDING THE CAPTURE OR EXECUTION OF PRISONERS. MR. DANG SUGGESTED THAT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS INCIDENT, A JOINT TEAM SHOULD SEARCH OUT OLDER KIHMER RESIDENTS OF THE VILLAGES AROUND NUOL REAS MOUNTAIN.

D. SECOND INCIDENT: SOMETIME AFTER MAY 1970, TENS OF THOUSANDS OF AMERICAN AND REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM (ARVN) FORCES TOOK PART IN COMBINED ATTACKS AGAINST THE PAVN 5TH, 7TH, AND 9TH DIVISIONS IN THE VIETNAM-CAMBODIA BORDER REGION KNOWN AS THE IRON TRIANGLE AREA. THIS CAMPAIGN RESULTED IN HEAVY LOSSES AMONG THE AMERICAN-ARVN FORCES. ONE SPECIFIC ENGAGEMENT, WHICH TOOK PLACE AS THE AMERICANS WERE WITHDRAWING FROM KAMPONG CHAM PROVINCE, RESULTED IN THE LOSS OF 70 VEHICLES ALONG THE ROAD WHICH RUNS FROM KAMPONG CHAM INTO VIETNAM. IN THIS INCIDENT, APPROXIMATELY 10 U.S. SERVICEMEN WERE KILLED AND THEIR BODIES BURIED IN THE CHUP AREA (PROBABLY PHUMI CHU KRAU; WU653154) OF KAMPONG CHAM PROVINCE BY PAVN FORCES. MR. DANG HEARD ABOUT THIS INCIDENT FROM UNIDENTIFIED MEMBERS OF THE PAVN 5TH, 7TH, OR 9TH DIVISIONS.

E. SHORTLY AFTER THIS INCIDENT, PAVN FORCES WERE FORCED TO WITHDRAW FROM KAMPONG CHAM PROVINCE BY POL POT FORCES. THIS WAS ALSO THE LAST MAJOR ENGAGEMENT BY U.S. GROUND FORCES IN CAMBODIA. FROM THIS TIME THROUGH 1975, THE AMERICANS RELIED PRIMARILY ON AIR POWER AND BOMBING MISSIONS IN CAMBODIA. THERE WERE TWO MORE MAJOR CAMPAIGNS IN CAMBODIA IN WHICH THE "PUPPET SAIGON" FORCES ASSISTED THE LON NOL REGIME IN ATTACKS IN THE TONLE SAP AREA (POSSIBLY LOCATED IN THE VICINITY OF UV915372) DURING THE CON RE AND THE SON LA 2 CAMPAIGNS.


8. KR POLICY ON PRISONERS. IN 1951, HO CHI MINH ISSUED A DIRECTIVE WHICH SET THE POLICY FOR VIETNAM VIS-A-VIS CAMBODIA. THIS DIRECTIVE CALLED FOR VIETNAM TO PROVIDE THE SAME ASSISTANCE TO CAMBODIANS AS THEY DID FOR THEIR OWN PEOPLE IN THE STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE. AT THE SAME TIME, VIETNAM WAS OBLIGATED...


CAPTURED, BUT THE 600 VIETNAMESE CIVILIANS WHO
HAD BEEN TAKEN PRISONER HAD ALREADY BEEN KILLED.
THIS WAS THE BEGINNING OF THE VIETNAMESE OPERATION
AGAINST THE KR IN CAMBODIA.
11. EFFORTS TO LOCATE GRAVES IN CAMBODIA.
MR. DANG STATED THAT UNLIKE THE PROGRAM VIETNAM’S
VETERANS HAVE ESTABLISHED WITH LAOS TO LOCATE THE
BURIAL SITES OF FALLEN TEAM MEMBERS, NO AGREEMENT
WITH CAMBODIA HAS BEEN REACHED. ALTHOUGH EFFORTS
HAVE BEEN MADE, THE CURRENT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA IS NOT THE SAME AS IT ONCE WAS
UNDER THE PREVIOUS HUN SEN GOVERNMENT. NOW THERE
ARE A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT FACTIONS WITHIN THE
CAMBODIAN GOVERNMENT AND REACHING AN AGREEMENT AMONG
THESE VARIOUS FACTIONS IS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT.
WHILE SOME ARE AGREEABLE TO THIS TYPE OF PROGRAM,
OTHERS ARE NOT BECAUSE OF THEIR SUSPICIONS OF
VIETNAM’S POSSIBLE ULTERIOR MOTIVES. WITH REGARD
TO TRILATERAL ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN THE U.S.,
VIETNAM, AND CAMBODIA TO LOCATE MISSING AMERICANS,
MR. DANG INDICATED A LACK OF SUPPORT FROM THE
CAMBODIAN SIDE TO CARRY THIS OUT.
12. CAMBODIA SITUATION AFTER 1975. AFTER THE KR
SEIZED CONTROL OF PHNOM PENH IN APRIL 1975, THERE
WERE ONLY THREE DAYS, FROM 17 TO 20 APRIL, IN WHICH
FOREIGNERS COULD LEAVE. BY 1976, WHEN MR. DANG
VISITED THE VIETNAMESE EMBASSY IN PHNOM PENH, THERE
WERE STILL A NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN THE OTHER FOREIGN
EMBASSIES, BUT THEY WERE UNABLE TO VENTURE OUT FOR
ANY REASON. BY THIS TIME THERE WAS NO GASOLINE
LEFT IN THE CITY AND PERSONS CAUGHT ANYWHERE ON
FOOT WERE KILLED ON THE SPOT. VIETNAM CUT OFF
RELATIONS WITH CAMBODIA THE FOLLOWING YEAR IN 1977.
BY THIS TIME THE KR HAD ALSO INITIATED EXECUTIONS
OF ANYONE OF MIXED RACIAL HERITAGE. MR. DANG STATED
THAT PRIOR TO THIS, THERE WERE APPROXIMATELY 30,000
ETHNIC VIETNAMESE IN CAMBODIA WHO WERE FAMILIAR
WITH CAMBODIAN CUSTOMS AND HAD INTERMARRIED WITH
CAMBODIAN NATIONALS. BY 1979, ONLY 700 REMAINED
ALIVE.
13. PRISONER OF WAR CAMPS. MR. DANG STATED THAT
NO PRISONER OF WAR CAMPS EXISTED IN CAMBODIA, ONLY
extermination camps. He recalled that during the
SHAHNOK DAYS PRIOR TO THE REBIRTH OF THE KR IN
1970, THERE WAS A FACILITY LOCATED IN PHNOM PENH
DESIGNATED "PRISON 24". AFTER THE KR TOOK CONTROL
OF PHNOM PENH, THE ONLY PRISON THAT REMAINED IN
PHNOM PENH WAS TUOL SLENG. THERE WERE THOUSANDS
OF PRISONERS HELD IN TUOL SLENG; HOWEVER,
MR. DANG WAS UNAWARE OF ANY FOREIGNERS HELD
THERE. HE WAS UNAWARE OF ANY PRISONER OF WAR

UNCLASSIFIED
Camps in Vietnam.

14. Mr. Dang was unfamiliar with any Cambodian Government, military, or civilian official who might have information pertinent to the U.S. MIA issue. He added that many of his former associates in Cambodia were killed during the Khmer Rouge purge and it has been over 20 years since he has had contact with any of those who may have survived. He agreed to honor any future request for re-interview with a U.S. Cambodia specialist as long as the request was passed through the appropriate Vietnamese government channels. Mr. Dang is a fluent Cambodian speaker.


16. Interviewer comments.

A. Witness reliability: Credible. Despite his advanced age, Mr. Dang was extremely lucid and knowledgeable. His responses were concise and at no time did he seem evasive or disingenuous.

B. Potential leads: None.

C. Other: Recommend Mr. Dang be considered for re-interview by the Stony Beach Cambodian Specialist. //

ADMIN
BT
#8922