

HR70-14

FOR INFORMATION

MR.

11-8-71

MR.

6 NOV 1971

MR. COFFEY

30 NOV 1971

MR.

APPROVED FOR RELEASE
DATE: 29-Apr-2009



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DD/S 71-

8 NOV 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: Legislative Council

**SUBJECT : Article Regarding Air America Violation of Burmese
Air Space in WASHINGTON POST, 8 Nov. 1971**

1. has furnished me with detailed information on the incident where the Air America helicopter was detained by the Burmese. The story is essentially as I have given it to you except that it did occur on 10 November 1970 and not in May as indicated in the article.

2. As you can see from the attached, there was only a U.S. pilot and a Thai mechanic aboard the aircraft; there was no Burmese Military Attache aboard.

3. The attached is submitted for your information and retention.

Special Assistant to the
Deputy Director for Support

Att.

SA-DD/S/ (4 Nov. 71)

Distribution:

Orig. - Addressee w/att.

1 - via w/cpy att.

1 - DD/S Subject w/cpy att.

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On 10 November, Air America H-34D helicopter (H-62) made a forced landing at Tachilek Airport, Burma, due to weather and a low fuel supply. A three hour SAR mission was conducted by [redacted] prior to being notified by Rangoon U.S. Embassy through Bangkok Embassy and Udorn Air Force Base that the aircraft had made an emergency landing and the crew, one American and one Thai, were safe, but in Burmese military custody. The pilot and Thai mechanic are experienced personnel and Air America is convinced the emergency procedures were inadvertent. While being questioned by Burmese officials, the crew reported they were on an air drop mission with tins of beef for refugees. Release of aircraft and crew was delayed by bureaucratic functioning of Burmese Government in spite of pressure from Laotian, Thailand and Burmese Embassies. In addition to evasion, there was unusual secrecy exercised by the Burmese Government and military. The American Embassy reported that perhaps some of the delay was due to two "sten type" weapons being found on board, although it was presumed they were normal survival equipment. Also, Rangoon reported an unconfirmed overflight by another helicopter of similar type approximately 26 hours after the forced landing. On 180100 November, the American Embassy at Rangoon advised the release would take place promptly, and three and one-half hours later the helicopter arrived at Udorn Air Force Base.

Per an intelligence report and information from the American Embassy, Vientiane, the Burmese Executive Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs feels that the Air America helicopter which landed in Burma on 10 November (see November monthly report) was controlled by the Central Intelligence Agency. Also, he alleged that possibly the cargo on board the aircraft (tins of beef) was for U. Nu insurgents vice Laotians refugees. This hypothesis was apparently discarded as a Burmese general, who is very touchy on the subject, granted release of the aircraft, cargo and crew. Prior to release, the pilot was requested to sign a statement that he landed due to low fuel and bad weather; that his aircraft had been returned in perfect condition; that there had been no loss to the documents, arms and ammunition, currencies, personal belongings, and all miscellaneous items relevant to the aircraft; (This statement could be a source for misrepresentation, but Embassy officials do not envision any.) and that he extended his gratitude for his friendly treatment and succor. No repercussions directly relating to this incident are anticipated, but in the event of a recurrence, it is anticipated that GOB may not be quite so cooperative.