



CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

29 October 1971

NSC review completed

MEMORANDUM FOR: Dr. Henry A. Kissinger
Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs

SUBJECT : Background Data Possibly Relevant to the
Current Vietnamese Communist Prisoner
Exchange Overture

25X1 1. The current Vietnamese Communist overtures on possible
25X1 prisoner exchanges, covered in our memoranda of 27 and 28 October,
seems to relate to the earlier [redacted] activity that began in
August 1967. We have checked the voluminous [redacted] file and
found three items of possible relevance. The pertinent traffic should
be contained in your records, but in the interests of time and convenience
we are repeating it here.

25X1 2. The January 1968 Letters. On 3 January 1968, then Deputy
Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA) Richard Steadman was given five
letters prepared in Washington for passage to five American citizens
believed to be in VC hands. The pertinent message here is Secretary
Rusk's cable to Ambassador Bunker transmitted on 3 January 1968 as
[redacted]

"Five letters to US personnel who may be held by
VC being carried by Steadman for delivery to Calhoun.
Steadman traveling with General William Depuy. ETA
Saigon 1330 local January 4 on Braniff military charter
flight 241. In view shortness of time suggest envelope
be picked up from Steadman upon arrival Saigon.

DPMO review(s) completed.

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State Dept. review completed

Eric Choro

SECRET

"Letters are addressed to following US personnel:
(Dates shown are date of casualty, which may be same
as date of capture if men are in fact prisoners.)

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[Redacted]

John F. Conlon III, Capt. 79318, AF,
4 March 1966
David S. Demmon, SP4, 563 73 772, Army,
9 June 1965
William F. Eisenbraun, Capt. 04074803,
Army, 5 July 1965
Douglas K. Ramsey, Foreign Service Officer,
17 January 1966

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"Eisenbraun and Ramsey are confirmed prisoners.
[Redacted] Conlon, and Demmon are listed as missing in action,
but in each instance there is some reason to hope that
service man is actually prisoner of VC. Families unaware
letters being sent by this route."

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25X1 4. The February 1968 List. In January and February 1968
25X1 there was much discussion about giving [redacted]
25X1 [redacted] a list of US prisoners whose release we desired as part of
25X1 any exchange. The most important message here is Secretary Rusk's
25X1 7 February 1968 cable to Ambassador Bunker transmitted as [redacted]
[redacted]

25X1 "List of names to send to [redacted] should be
25X1 drawn from list of US prisoners we have identified as
held by the VC (18 at present). Since [redacted]
has been specific with his lists we believe we should also
be precise. We recognize problem of choosing among
prisoners, and accordingly propose that we select those
who have been held two years or longer. This would be
a total of ten names: five officers, four EM, one civilian.
There is a time gap of eight months between the most
recent capture on the list of ten (January 1966) and the
next most recent captures (August 1966). From released
prisoners we know that the longer a man is held, the
more likely he is to be seriously ill. In the absence of
reliable information on the health of individual prisoners,
a selection by duration of captivity appears to be fairest.
25X1 Accordingly, the following list should be sent [redacted]
25X1 [redacted] with the request that at least three of
the named prisoners be released. Message should also
state that we would particularly like to have any prisoners
who may be seriously sick or injured, whether or not their
names are on list. (Date in each case is date of capture,
and should not be transmitted to VC.)

Begin list:

T/Sgt Samuel Adams, AF, 31 Oct 65
Capt. Donald Gilbert Cook, MC, 31 Dec 64
Capt. William Forbes Eisenbraun, Army,
6 July 65
Pvt. Robert Russell Garwood, MC, 28 Sept 65
Capt. Lawrence Thomas Holland, AF,
12 June 65
SP/4 James Henry McLean, Army, 9 Feb 65

~~SECRET~~ / [redacted]

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M/Sgt Thomas Moore, AF, 31 Oct 65
Douglas K. Ramsey, Civ., 17 Jan 66
Capt. James Nicholas Rowe, Army,
29 Oct 63

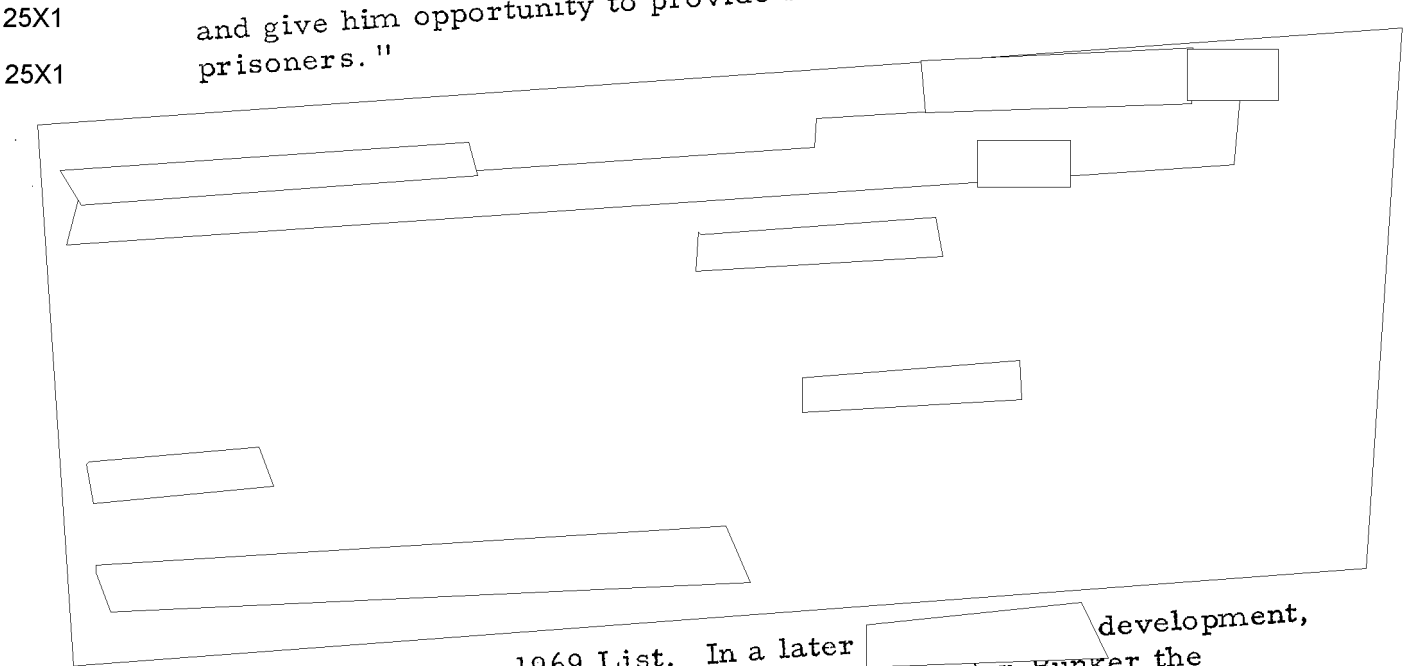
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Capt. Floyd James Thompson, Army,
26 Mar 64

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"Believe we should inform Thieu of plan to send list
and give him opportunity to provide similar list of ARVN
prisoners."



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6. The January 1969 List. In a later [redacted] development,
on 30 January 1969 Secretary Rogers sent Ambassador Bunker the
following list of twenty names "suitable to give to VC with request that
they release ten of them in exchange for the four they have requested."
[redacted] info copies to Dr. Kissinger and Secretary Laird):

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- TSGT Samuel Adams, 18554000, AF,
October 31, 1965
- Michael D. Bengé, Civilian,
January 31, 1968
- SGT Richard Gordon Burgess, 2084229, MC,
September 25, 1966
- MAJ Donald Gilbert Cook, 072794, MC,
December 31, 1964

~~SECRET~~ / [redacted]

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Gary Daves, Civilian, January 31, 1968
1st LT David Ronald Devers, 05321911,
Army, August 13, 1966

[Redacted]

TSGT Charles Gale Dusing, 17203698,
AF, October 31, 1965
SGT Edwin Russel Grissett, Jr., 1938579,
MC, January 22, 1966
MAJ Lawrence Thomas Holland, 57577,
AF, June 12, 1965
Philip W. Manhard, Civilian, January 31, 1968
SP4 James Henry McLean, 19722072, Army,
February 9, 1965
MSGT Thomas Moore, 14268347, AF,
October 31, 1965
SFC John Joseph O'Neill, 11212494, Army,
August 13, 1966
Thomas W. Ragsdale, Civilian, January 31, 1968
Douglas Ramsey, Civilian, January 17, 1966
SP5 Edward Daniel Reilly, Jr., 23933241, Army,
April 26, 1966
CAPT Floyd James Thompson, 05304076, Army,
March 26, 1964
Eugene Weaver, Civilian, January 31, 1968
Charles Willis, Civilian, January 31, 1968

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[Redacted] the above list
of twenty names was never passed to the Communists. Three of the names
on the February 1968 list of ten were not included in the January 1969 list
of twenty: US Army Captain Rowe, who escaped on 31 December 1968,
US Army Captain William E. Eisenbraun (also an addressee of one of
the five January 1968 letters) and USMC Private Robert R. Garwood.

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8. I am sending copies of this memorandum on an eyes only basis to the other three recipients of my 27 and 28 October memoranda, namely, Secretary Rogers, Secretary Laird and Admiral Moorer.

RS/
Richard Helms
Director

cc: Secretary Rogers
Secretary Laird
Admiral Moorer

DCI/SAVA:GACarver, Jr/mee 29Oct71

Distribution

1 - ER

1 - DDP

1 - C/FE

[redacted] 25X1

1 - Deptow file
1 - Sac Chron

SECRET, [redacted]

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