



Intelligence Information Report

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REPORT NO. [ ]

DATE DISTR. 3 December 1970

COUNTRY North Vietnam

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SUBJECT Exploitation of U.S. Prisoners of War

*WBS*  
*FYI - ATLCRAAR*  
*Dave - Ellis*

*Put with others*  
*Delivers, check JAWIC*

ACQ Vietnam, Saigon (8 September 70)

FIELD NO. [ ]

SOURCE [ ]

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STATE	DIA	ARMY	NAVY	AIR	NSA	CRS	(For Field Distribution see final paragraph)
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Approved for Release  
Date September 1993

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Summary: The Lao Dong Party Central Committee, based on experience gained during the French resistance, established policies regarding U.S. prisoners of war which included exploiting each prisoner to the fullest extent possible. Exploitation of the prisoners was carried out by either or both the Ministry of National Defense (MND) and the Ministry of Public Security (MPS), depending on such criteria as time and circumstances of capture, current tactical and strategic objectives, and long-range potential of individual prisoners. Information on or from the U.S. prisoners was shared with other Communist countries, principally the USSR and Cuba. End Summary.

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1. (Field Comment: In the following report [ ] was vague and inconsistent on the exact roles played by the MPS and the MND in prisoner of war exploitation, possibly indicating that his interpretations of the delineation of responsibility between the MND and the MPS may be based on only general information. He gave a much larger role to the MPS than did several other sources whose access to this information was much more direct, although less broad, [ ] One source claimed that the MPS conducted no interrogations at the Hoa Lo Prison, whereas other sources reported a limited role for the MPS in this field.)

2. North Vietnamese policy, as set forth by the Central Committee of the Lao Dong Party, concerning the handling and exploitation of U.S. prisoners of war was based on Viet Minh policy towards prisoners who had been captured during the French resistance and knowledge of prisoner exploitation which North Vietnam (NVN) had acquired from both the USSR and Communist China. The policy also drew upon the personal experiences of senior members of the NVN Government who at various times had served in French prisons or prisoner of war camps.

3. The capture of U.S. and other prisoners of war was considered the responsibility of every agency, facility and citizen in NVN. The initial screening and subsequent exploitation of each U.S. prisoner depended on the place, date and circumstances of capture and the criteria for classifying prisoners into categories. During the period of heavy U.S. bombing of NVN and the resulting destruction of transportation facilities, the established procedures for handling prisoners of war and for evacuating them to central NVN establishments were modified somewhat. The proximity to Hanoi of a province where a prisoner was captured and the availability of transportation were primary considerations affecting the immediate exploitation of a prisoner and his prompt transfer to Hanoi. Consequently, while Hanoi was subjected to heavy aerial bombings, representatives of the MPS and/or MND, depending on which was in possession of the prisoner, traveled to the province to exploit the prisoner locally until arrangements could be made for his transfer to Hanoi.

4. Information obtained from a prisoner at each level was recorded in detail and incorporated into a "Preliminary Personal Record." The information was correlated with that already acquired on the prisoner from other sources, including, if the prisoner were a pilot, information on his aircraft, its flight plan, tactics, apparent targets and accompanying aircraft. The apparent targets were deduced from information received from the anti-aircraft unit which shot down the plane and from units responsible for the physical security of the targets. This information was used to help establish the veracity of the information provided by the prisoner and to aid NVN's defense of the targets.

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5. Exploitation of the prisoner depended upon the category in which he was placed. The categorization of prisoners depended upon the affiliation of the initial capturing/screening unit; the extent to which the prisoner had been exploited prior to his transfer to Hanoi; the prisoner's apparent areas of knowledgeability as established during preliminary screening; the prisoner's age, grade, intelligence, position and degree of cooperation; evidence of possible compromise of security within a element of the NVN Government; possibility of escape by the prisoner, and the national origin of the prisoner.

6. Prisoners handled by public security service elements when captured were transferred to MPS facilities, and prisoners handled initially by military elements in the provinces were transferred to MND detention facilities in Hanoi. The MND interrogated prisoners for tactical and strategic military information, and the MPS interrogated for political, scientific, economic and, to some degree, military information. The MND was not interested in long-range exploitation of prisoners, and it confined its activities primarily to the collection of tactical and strategic military information, with little time given to longer range objectives. The responsibility of the MND was considerably broader than that of the MPS in collecting tactical and strategic military information. Information collected by the MND was passed to the MPS Combined Research Agency for review to determine if requirements from other government agencies had been satisfied. Information collected by the MPS was similarly passed to the MND. (Field Comment: [ ] did not know what requirements from other NVN agencies were serviced. He was not acquainted with the specific MND elements involved in this, other than the information was passed to the MND's Intelligence Department /Cuc Tinh Bao/.)

7. The assignment of a prisoner to either the MPS or the MND depended not only on factors enumerated in paragraph 5 but also on the prisoner's "Preliminary Personal Record" and on the MND or MPS screening which occurred at the central level upon the prisoner's arrival in Hanoi to determine more precisely the prisoner's areas of knowledgeability. The ensuing interrogations, whether conducted by the MND or the MPS, included the following:

- a. Enemy combat tactics, techniques and order of battle.
- b. Enemy personnel, morale, fighting spirit and motivation factors.
- c. Enemy weaponry, technical equipment and war materiel, with especial attention to enemy use of armor and armored vehicles.
- d. Enemy knowledge of the Viet Cong (VC) and North Vietnamese Army (NVA) forces in South Vietnam (SVN) generally, and specifically in the prisoner's activity and field of interest.
- e. History of enemy presence in SVN, units and activities.
- f. War-making potential of the enemy and his units both in SVN and other areas where enemy support and reinforcements could be obtained.
- g. Nature of coordination and cooperation between U.S. and other Allied units, including relationship between Allied units and the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) forces.
- h. Economic war-making potential of the U.S., concentrating on information regarding production capabilities of U.S. war-related industries.

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i. Social class origin of members of U.S. military services. [ ] the MND reportedly had established that most members of the U.S. Air Force were from the wealthier social class, whereas infantry and artillery troops were from the poorer, less-educated social class.)

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j. Professional background, psychological makeup and aspirations of the prisoner.

k. General knowledge and comprehension of Americans in SVN of the military, political and economic situations in SVN and other countries.

l. Behavior, mental attitude and viewpoints of Americans while under combat stress in SVN.

m. Professional backgrounds and previous assignments of other U.S. prisoners in NVN.

n. Effect of NVN's ideological indoctrination programs on U.S. prisoners in NVN and results of NVN military proselyting efforts in SVN.

8. Interrogations were aimed at gaining the complete cooperation of a prisoner so his services could be employed in anti-war activities such as letter writing to Americans in the U.S., including not only relatives and friends but also individuals whose names had been obtained from other prisoners; making pro-NVN and anti-U.S. radio broadcasts; and other forms of propaganda. After a prisoner had cooperated, he might be employed in technical fields where his specialized knowledge could be used. U.S. prisoners were indoctrinated to adopt a friendly attitude toward NVN and upon their return to the U.S. to convey a pro-NVN, anti-war feeling to their families, friends and relatives.

[ ] this followed the example of Viet Minh proselyting activities against French prisoners. The Viet Minh objective was to recruit as many French prisoners as possible to foment revolutions against the French Government and the governments of French-dominated countries. [ ] the MPS and MND did not believe that U.S. prisoners could be successfully proselyted into attempting a revolution in the U.S.)

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9. Field Dissem: State USMACV 7th Air Force NAVFORV CINCPAC PACFLT PACAF ARPAC [ ]

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