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DIRECTORATE OF PLANS

THIS IS AN INFORMATION REPORT, NOT FINALLY EVALUATED INTELLIGENCE

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REPORT NO. CS-311/03539-69

DATE DISTR. 17 April 1969

COUNTRY: Laos

DOI : 16 December 1966 - 27 January 1969

SUBJECT: 1. Enemy Prisons and Civilian Morale in Eastern Savannakhet Province
2. Bomb Damage Along Route 911

L-11

ACQ : Laos, Vientiane (4 March 1969)

SOURCE : [redacted]

Summary: On 16 December 1966, a Lao [redacted] was captured by North Vietnamese Army (NVA) troops near Muong Nong (XD 802100). He was interrogated and then taken to a prison camp south of Route 912 near Ban Pakoy (XD 250770). In January 1968, the prison was moved northwest to a new location south of Route 912 near Ban Namphay (XD 2031). No occidential prisoners were at either facility. North Vietnamese exercised complete military and civilian control over the area where the two prisons were located. Troop and civilian morale in the area was bad. The sector had food and fuel shortages and area villagers no longer wanted or appreciated the Vietnamese presence. [redacted] escaped from the Namphay prison on [redacted] 1969. While travelling west, he crossed motorable truck routes and observed 10 bodies and several destroyed trucks at a possible truck park along Route 911 just south of the 911/912 junction. End of Summary.

Prisons

1. On [redacted] December 1966, a Lao [redacted] was captured by North Vietnamese Army (NVA) troops in the vicinity of Ban Suong Rou (XD 649192), east of Route 92 and about 10

APPROVED FOR RELEASE
Date 20 AUG 1979

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(classification) (dissem symbols)

STATE	DIA	ARMY	NAVY	A.F.	NSA	AID	[redacted]	(For Field Distribution see final paragraph)

[redacted]

Encl 149 (S-47,601/084H)

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kilometers (km) northeast of Muong Nong in Savannakhet Province. North Vietnamese interrogated him in the Muong Rou sector for five days and then incarcerated him in a prison south of Route 912 5.5 kilometers northeast of Ban Pakoy, and 100 meters west of the Nam (river) Sangi, from January 1967 to January 1968. The prison held 48 inmates, including 46 Lao Armed Forces (FAR) soldiers and pro-Lao Government civilians and two Lao guerrillas. The prison consisted of four buildings, each housing 12 men. The guard force consisted of five Phou Thai and local tribesmen armed with 7.62mm assault rifles.

2. In January 1968, the prison was relocated eight kilometers to the west, about 800 meters east of Ban Namphay. The prison held 76 inmates, of which 72 were FAR soldiers and pro-Lao Government civilians and four were Lao [redacted] No American or occidental prisoners were seen. The new prison was approximately 500 meters in circumference and was surrounded by three bamboo fences. Eight buildings and a large air raid trench were inside the compound and six houses were outside it. The prisoners were served two meals of poor quality and small quantity daily. Ten prisoners died of starvation between January 1968 and January 1969. Four guards stood duty at the prison and they were continually rotated. The guards, from the Phou Thai and Xo tribes, continually beat and cruelly mistreated the prisoners. Periodically, all of the prisoners were gathered in the center of the compound and instructed to hate the imperialist Americans and their lackey, the Royal Lao Government.

Enemy Control and Civilian Morale

3. North Vietnamese Army commanders in the two prison areas described above appointed all village chiefs in the sector. These village leaders were ethnic Lao; however, they took orders directly from the North Vietnamese who controlled the area. Villagers supported the Pathet Lao (PL)/NVA forces in the area mainly because of fear. If they did not render their support, they would be imprisoned or killed. Morale of civilians and even of the PL and NVA soldiers in the area was low because of the threat of air strikes and the small quantity of food available. There was also an extreme shortage of petroleum, oil, and lubricant products.

4. The PL and NVA troops in the sector forced the villagers to supply them with 20 kilograms of their harvests. They also confiscated animals and foodstuffs. The troops gave the villagers clothes if they needed them in exchange for some of the foodstuffs. Only PL money was used in the area.

5. Any villager, male or female, above the age of 10 was conscripted to support the PL and NVA in the area. The younger ones either made clothes or acted as coolies. The older ones, including females, carried weapons. The females were primarily used for village defense. Only old men and women were left in the villages. The young men were sent to the "front lines" and the young women served as home guards.

6. The PL/NVA propaganda in the area was ineffective due primarily to the fact that PL/NVA troops had been

[redacted]

telling the villagers in the area the same thing since 1962 but had not fulfilled any of their promises. Villagers stated that they welcomed the Vietnamese in 1962 but after so many years with only war and little food they no longer wanted them to stay.

7. The following weapons were carried by PL/NVA regular and irregular troops in the two prison areas: 7.62mm assault rifles, 7.62mm semiautomatic carbines (SKS), 7.62mm submachine guns (PPSH), 7.62mm light machine guns (RPD), antitank launchers (RPG-2), M-1 and M-2 carbines, M-1 rifles, and 60mm and 80mm mortars.

Bomb Damage

8. After escaping from the Ban Namphay prison on 23 January 1969, [redacted] walked due west. On 27 January he observed approximately 10 badly decayed bodies amid the wreckage of several trucks in a truck park. [redacted] Comment: Source's best estimate of the location of the park placed it along Route 911 between XD 028830 and XD 030790, just south of the 911/912 junction.) The area seemed large enough to bivouac two battalions. Telephone lines ran parallel to the road near the possible truck park.

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

[redacted]