[redacted] CS 317/09037/73 [redacted]

21 March 1973

[redacted]

COUNTRY SOUTH VIETNAM

DOI 15 FEBRUARY AND 3 MARCH 1973

SUBJECT SIGHTING OF TWO GROUPS OF U.S. PRISONERS OF WAR IN KIEN THANH DISTRICT, KIEN GIANG PROVINCE, SOUTH VIETNAM

73

ACQ VIETNAM, CAN THO (7 MARCH 1973) [redacted]

SOURCE [redacted]

1. ON 15 FEBRUARY 1973 [redacted] FROM THE COASTAL AREA OF NY LAM VILLAGE, KIEN THANH DISTRICT, KIEN GIANG PROVINCE, SAW FIVE U.S. PRISONERS OF WAR (POW) AT THE APPROXIMATE LOCATION OF WS011144, NEAR THE GULF. FOUR OF THE POW'S WERE CAUCASIAN AND WORE BLACK UNIFORMS, THE FIFTH WAS A NEGRO WHO WORE A BLUE UNIFORM. THE PRISONERS WERE IN THE CUSTODY OF ABOUT 30 SOLDIERS WHO WORE BLACK UNIFORMS AND WERE EQUIPPED WITH AK-47 RIFLES, FOUR B-40 ROCKET LAUNCHERS, A RADIO AND TWO CAMERAS. THE UNIT WAS MOVING AWAY FROM THE DIRECTION OF BA THE MOUNTAIN IN HUE

[redacted]

APPROVED FOR RELEASE
Date 20 AUG 1979

DIA #25

[redacted]

DUC DISTRICT, AN GIANG PROVINCE, TOWARD THE KIEM LAN CANAL (WS090180), KIEN THANH DISTRICT. ON THE NIGHT OF 14/15 FEBRUARY, THE UNIT CROSSED ROUTE 8A AND PROCEEDED TO THE COAST TO MEET BOATS AND TRAVEL TO AN UNKNOWN DESTINATION.

2. ON 3 MARCH 1973 [redacted] IN MY LAM VILLAGE, KIEN THANH DISTRICT, SAID HE SAW TEN U.S. POW'S, ALL CAUCASIANS, DRESSED IN BLACK UNIFORMS. TWO OF THE POW'S WERE ARMED WITH K-54 PISTOLS. THE MEN WERE WITH A NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY(NVA) UNIT OF 250 MEN EQUIPPED WITH TWO 82MM MORTARS, FOUR 61MM MORTARS, FOUR 57MM RECOILLESS RIFLES, B-40 ROCKETS AND AK-47 RIFLES. THE ENTIRE GROUP ARRIVED AT MY LAM VILLAGE ON 1 MARCH AND STAYED IN THE VILLAGE FOR THREE DAYS. DURING THOSE THREE DAYS THEY CONDUCTED TWO PROPAGANDA SESSIONS FOR THE LOCAL INHABITANTS. DURING THESE SESSIONS, THE POW'S SPOKE TO THE INHABITANTS THROUGH AN INTERPRETER. THEY SEEMED HAPPY AND SAID THEY WOULD BE RELEASED SOON. ACCORDING TO VILLAGERS, THE PRISONERS WERE BEING MOVED TO CAMBODIA WHERE THEY WOULD BE RELEASED IN EXCHANGE FOR ABOUT 100 COMMUNIST POLITICAL PRISONERS.

3. [redacted] COMMENT: THE FOLLOWING IS THE JOINT CASUALTY RESOLUTION CENTER (JCRC) EVALUATION OF THE REPORT: JCRC

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INFORMATION HAS INDICATED THE PRESENCE OF FOUR TO SIX U.S. POWS IN THE DELTA REGION FOR SEVERAL YEARS. THREE CAUCASIAN AND ONE NEGRO POW HAVE BEEN FREQUENTLY REPORTED IN THE SEVEN MOUNTAINS AREA. INFREQUENT SIGHTINGS OF SMALL GROUPS OF U.S. PERSONNEL HAVE COME FROM THE U MINH FOREST AREA AND THE CENTRAL PORTION OF THE DELTA, NEAR CHUONG THINH. NONE OF THE INDIVIDUALS ON THE PROVISIONAL REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT (PRG) RELEASE LIST APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN HELD IN THE SOUTHERN DELTA AND THOSE KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN CAPTURED IN THAT AREA ARE REPORTED TO HAVE DIED IN CAPTIVITY. LACK OF INDIVIDUAL DESCRIPTION PRECLUDES FURTHER IDENTIFICATION. HOWEVER, BASED ON JCRC HOLDINGS AND LACK OF RETURNEES WHO CAN BE ASSOCIATED WITH CAPTIVITY IN THE DELTA REGION, THIS INFORMATION APPEARS HIGHLY PLAUSIBLE.)

4. FIELD DISSEM: EMBASSY JCRC AT SAIGON: CONSULATE GENERAL AT CAN THO: SENT TO CINCPAC (EXCLUSIVE FOR CINCPAC AND POLAD ONLY) JCRC [redacted]

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