

19 March 1986

PR 1909457 Jul 76

Jul 76 MSG transmitted info volunteered by an U/1 VN and wife to western diplomat in Hanoi.

Western diplomat described the sources as reliable.

SIGHTING: Stopped by PSS O/A 10 Jul 76, Vic Hanoi
. Shown photo of "American pilot who escaped from jail."
. Photo depicted bearded man."
. Asked if had seen the pilot.

Account coincides with Arlo Gay's personal account of his escape.
. Held near Hanoi.
. Escaped O/A 10 July 76
. Remain free approximately 1 month.
. Personally observed "wanted photos" of himself.
. 3 locations
. Wearing beard.

Based on coincident of date, locale and circumstances, subject of the Jul 76 report undoubtedly Gay.

MFR: Briefing notes used for discussions with Sen. Deconcini and members of Congress on 19 Mar 86, at request of Congressman Hendon.

ESCAPED AMERICAN PILOT IN HANOI

On 17 July 1976, an official of a friendly foreign embassy in Hanoi departed the DRV. During a 24 hour transit of Vientiane, Laos, the embassy official informed U.S. Government officials that while enroute to the Hanoi airport he was approached by a Vietnamese source who had frequent contact with foreigners and was well known to him personally.

The Vietnamese source related that a few days previous he was questioned by an individual allegedly from the Vietnamese Security Service regarding an escaped "American Pilot." The Vietnamese source was told that "pilots" were currently in Hanoi and was shown a photograph of the "American Pilot" who allegedly escaped from jail in Hanoi.

On 27 July 1976, further information was received through the friendly foreign ambassador that the above-mentioned source was reliable and that the source's wife had also seen the "wanted" picture of the "American pilot" and described the individual in the photograph as bearded.

The information provided in this report closely parallels Mr. Arlo Gay's account of his arrest and detention in Vietnam. Mr. Gay was a self-employed fisherman who was arrested at Hon Tre Island, South Vietnam, on or about 30 April 1975, and eventually taken to North Vietnam, where he was incarcerated at a prison camp known as "The Briarpatch," about 50 miles west of Hanoi. He was released by the Vietnamese in September 1976. In describing his experiences to American Embassy Officials in Bangkok, upon his departure from Vietnam, Mr. Gay related that he escaped from the prison in North Vietnam on 10 July 1976; and, after an unsuccessful attempt to walk out of Vietnam, he surrendered himself at an ethnic minority settlement in North Vietnam on 5 August 1976.

Mr. Gay recalled that his captors had photographed him with a beard on 10 or 12 October 1975. He further stated that while returning to the prison after he surrendered to North Vietnam authorities on 5 August 1976, his captors showed him a photograph of himself with a beard on three occasions: once, at what appeared to be a mental institution with about 100 inmates; and twice at vehicle check points at which their jeep was stopped enroute back to the prison camp. It is obvious from Mr. Gay's personal account, that, in their attempts to recapture him, the Vietnamese widely distributed photos of Mr. Gay with a beard.

CONCLUSION:

Mr. Gay's personal account confirms that the Vietnamese sources of the friendly foreign Ambassador described a photograph, dates, locales, and circumstances that are associated with Mr. Gay's escape from a North Vietnamese prison during July and August 1976.

FUTURE ACTION:

None Necessary.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
MESSAGE CENTER

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The Vietnamese source related that about one week earlier (i.e., about 10 July 1976) source was questioned by an individual, presumably from the Vietnamese Security Service, regarding the "American Pilot who escaped from jail." The Vietnamese source presumed that "pilots" were currently in Hanoi, because he had been shown a photograph of the escaped "Pilot" and asked whether he had seen him.

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CONCLUSION:

Mr. Gay's personal account of his escape from a North Vietnamese jail coincides with these sources' account as to date of incident (10 July 1976); the location of the incident (vicinity of Hanoi); and the circumstances (security services display of a wanted photo of a bearded American). The subject of this report undoubtedly is Mr. Gay.

VZC/CMAY76JILN104
MULT

05134
SECT OF OF 01/57

ACTION

DISTR

CJCSI (M4) CJCS DJS SJCS (M2) J3 (14) J5 (M2) NMCC (P2)
SAGA (M1) SECDEF (M7) NMIC SECDEF; ASD:LA (M1) ASD:ISA (P7)
ASD:PA (M1) ASD:PA (M1) GC (M1) DIA: (M1) (15) CMC
• CSAF WASH DC
• CNO WASH DC
• CSA WASH DC
PTC FILE (1)
(M59)

TRANSIT/190945Z/19125Z/001:4010R201124
DE RUMTBKA #1737 2011015
ZNY ZZH
P R 190945Z JUL 76
FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0205
INFO RUMJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUMJCS/DIA WASHDC
RUMTAP/AMEMBASSY HANOI 0771
RUMSAC/AMEMBASSY CAMBANG 2154
RUMSAC/AMEMBASSY CINCINAC
RUMDNR/JCNC HAS HANDBS P0161 01
BT

VIENTIANE 1737

CINCINAC ALSO FOR POLAR

C.O. 110021 1605-1
TAGS: HNS, AN, OS, AS
SUBJECT: AMERICAN PILOT RECENTLY ESCAPED FROM JAIL IN HANOI

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
COPYIED HIS FOR THE JULY 17 1976
WAS THE US A FRIENDLY SOURCE THAT, ACCORDING TO A SOURCE

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