Mr. and Mrs. Fred H. Blaney

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Blaney,

Thank you for your February 16 letter concerning the Viet-
Nam PW/MIA issue. Your sincere interest in this humanitarian
matter is appreciated.

It is United States policy to not only make every effort to
ensure the return of all our prisoners of war but also to seek
the fullest possible accounting for those who are not repatriated.
In this regard, since the end of the Viet-Nam War, progress has
been painfully slow because of intransigence on the part of the
Indochina governments. Despite their uncooperative attitude,
we are continuing to seek their assistance in accounting for our
missing. In addition to Department of Defense efforts immediately
following the ceasefire agreement, we have repeatedly raised the
issue through congressional and diplomatic channels.

The February 23-24, 1982 State-Defense delegation which
traveled to Viet-Nam for discussions with Vietnamese repre-
sentatives was approved by President Reagan and was the latest
in a series of attempts to gain cooperation from the Viet-
namese on this issue. The delegation's mandate was strictly
limited to discussion of PW/MIA matters. In contrast to some
earlier American missions to Hanoi, the delegation brought with
it considerable knowledge and expertise on the PW/MIA issue.
Collectively, the five members accounted for more than twenty
years of personal experience in Viet-Nam. During the discus-
sions it was made clear to the Vietnamese that President Reagan
was committed to accounting and the American people wanted this
humanitarian issue to be favorably resolved. Although there was
no major breakthrough, the talks did result in Vietnamese agree-
ment to continue the accounting discussions and to send a dele-
gation of technical experts to Hawaii to visit our PW/MIA facili-
ties.

Because a significant amount of the information pertaining
to the missing is in the hands of the Vietnamese and thus far we
have had little cooperation from them, we have been unable to
determine the fate of those missing in action or to verify the
validity of reported sightings of live Americans. There is an
increasing number of these reports which indicate that Americans
may be held against their will in Indochina but the U.S. Govern-
ment has thus far been unable to substantiate this information
and priority effort will continue to be assigned to investigating
these reports. All live sighting reports, whether firsthand or
hearsay, are thoroughly investigated.

Although more than nine years have passed since the signing
of the Paris Agreement, time has no way reduced U.S. Govern-
ment determination to resolve the PW/MIA issue. We would hope
that the PW/MIA mission to Viet-Nam will be the start of a more
frequent and regular dialogue with the Vietnamese. You may be
assured that the U.S. Government will continue to seek every
assistance from the Indochina governments to obtain the fullest
possible accounting and return of all recoverable remains.

Sincerely,

R. L. Armitage
Deputy Assistant Secretary
East Asia and Pacific Affairs
February 16, 1943

Dear Sir:

I read in our newspaper (February) that you are leading a delegation that is going to the U.S. in the near future. We are happy that you will put some pressure on the heads of the government to release more information on prisoners of war. We have heard that the American government will release some prisoners soon.

We are still very concerned about those 1,500 men still missing in action or prisoners of war. We pray that your trip will not be for nothing.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. Mrs. Fred B. Blassing