



Department of State TELEGRAM

PAGE 01 180842Z

10  
ACTION DPW-01

INFO: OCT-01 DHA-02 EA-07 SCA-01 SCS-03 PM-04 NSG-05 SP-02  
SS-15 IO-13 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PRS-01 RA-01 /065 W  
106936

R 180618Z OCT 76  
FM USDAO/BANGKOK  
TO CDR JCRC NAS BARBERS POINT HI  
INFO CINCPAC CAMP SMITH HI  
AMCONSUL UDORN THAI  
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE  
SECDEF PENTAGON WASHDC  
SECSTATE WASHDC

BANGKOK 1423 OCT 76

CINCPAC FOR J36, SECDEF FOR OSD-ISA, SECSTATE FOR STEVERTS,  
JCRC REPRESENTATIVE SENDS  
SUBJ: INTERVIEW OF FORMER PATHET LAO OFFICER, POW/MIA MATTERS  
REF: (A) AMCONSUL UDORN MSG 210228Z SEP 76 (UDORN 6066)  
(B) SECSTATE MSG 211640Z SEP 76 (STATE 233883)  
(C) AMEMBASSY BKK MSG 231151Z SEP 76 (BANGKOK 26801)  
1. REFERENCE A MESSAGE REPORTS ON INTERVIEW BY MIA WIFE MARY BOYLES  
OF PATHET LAO DEFECTOR AT NONG KHAI REFUGEE CAMP. REFERENCE B  
MESSAGE SUGGESTS RE-INTERVIEW OF PL DEFECTOR TO CLARIFY DETAILS  
REPORTED IN BOYLES INTERVIEW PERTAINING TO AMERICAN POWS IN LAOS.  
REFERENCE C MESSAGE REPORTS UNAVAILABILITY OF PL DEFECTOR FOR  
INTERVIEW AT THIS TIME.  
2. ON 14 OCTOBER 76, JCRC REPS INTERVIEWED FORMER PATHET LAO  
SOURCE AT SOURCE DATA. FOLLOWING  
INFO WAS OBTAINED PERTAINING TO HIS KNOWLEDGE OF AMERICANS LOST  
IN LAOS.  
3. AROUND AUGUST OR SEPTEMBER OF 1971, WHILE HIS BATTALION WAS  
LOCATED AT MUANG PHIN (XD0927), A PATHET LAO UNIT TURNED OVER TO  
SOURCE THREE CAUCASIAN AMERICAN FLYERS. THIS UNIT REPORTED THAT THE  
THREE FLYERS HAD PARACHUTED FROM A PLANE WHICH HAD BEEN SHOT DOWN  
AND CRASHED IN A RICE FIELD ABOUT SEVEN KILOMETERS FROM MUANG PHIN  
DISTRICT TOWN NEAR BAN NATHALANG (SC1428). THE PL UNIT REPORTED  
THAT THE PLANE WAS AN F-105. SHOOTDOWN TIME WAS ABOUT 1600 HOURS.  
SOURCE VISITED THE CRASH SITE HIMSELF. HE INDICATED THAT THE

0265

27



Department of State TELEGRAM

PAGE 02 180842Z

WRECKAGE WAS NOT WIDELY SCATTERED, THAT THE FRONT OF THE AIRCRAFT  
WAS FAIRLY INTACT AND NOSED DOWN INTO THE WET RICE FIELD, AND THAT  
THE BACK PART OF THE AIRCRAFT HAD BURNED. HE SAW NO OTHER BODIES  
IN OR AROUND THE WRECKAGE, AND THE UNIT HAD REPORTED NO ADDITIONAL  
BODIES TO SOURCE. THE THREE AMERICANS HANDED OVER TO SOURCE WERE  
DESCRIBED AS ONE OLDER (ABOUT 45 YEARS OLD) AND TWO YOUNGER (33 AND 38  
YEARS OLD). HE COULD RECALL NO FURTHER IDENTIFYING DETAILS (HAIR  
COLOR, TATOOS, ETC.) EXCEPT HE NOTED THAT ONE OF THE THREE HAD AN  
ARM WHICH WAS INJURED, ALTHOUGH NOT SERIOUSLY, WHEN TURNED OVER TO  
SOURCE. THE THREE AMERICANS WERE WEARING ONLY UNDERWEAR, NO  
UNIFORMS, BOOTS, OR FLIGHTSUITS, AND HAD BEEN STRIPPED OF JEWELRY  
AND WATCHES.

4. ON THE DAY HE RECEIVED THE PRISONERS, SOURCE ARRANGED FOR THEIR  
TRANSPORTATION BY RUSSIAN TRUCKS TO A PRISON. SOURCE ACCOMPANIED THE  
TRUCKS WHICH DEPARTED AT ABOUT 1800 HOURS FROM MUANG PHIN AND  
DROVE THROUGHOUT THE NIGHT. AT ABOUT 0500 THE FOLLOWING MORNING,  
THEY ARRIVED AT WHAT WAS DESCRIBED AS THE MAHAXAI PRISON OR JAIL.  
(SOURCE ALSO REFERRED TO IT AS THE UNIT 90 JAIL.) THIS PRISON WAS A  
CAVE COMPLEX LOCATED ABOUT 20 KILOMETERS SOUTHEAST OF MAHAXAI AT  
APPROXIMATE LOCATION WE4318. SOURCE CLAIMED THIS PRISON CONTAINED  
ABOUT 300 LAO, VIETNAMESE, THAI, AS WELL AS AMERICAN INMATES. THE  
PRISON WAS COMMANDED BY A LAO OFFICER WITH A VIETNAMESE OFFICER AS  
AN ADVISOR. THERE WERE ALREADY 12 AMERICANS AT THIS PRISON PRIOR  
TO THE ARRIVAL OF THE LATEST THREE. SOURCE NOTED AT THIS POINT IN  
THE INTERVIEW THAT THERE WERE QUOTE RUSSIANS AND CHINESE UNQUOTE  
STATIONED AT THIS PRISON, ASKED WHAT THEY DID, SOURCE STATED THEY  
WERE THERE TO RECEIVE COPIES OF INTERROGATION REPORTS ON THE  
AMERICANS, BUT THAT NO AMERICAN WAS EVER ALLOWED TO SEE A RUSSIAN  
OR CHINESE.

5. AFTER A FALLING-OUT WITH THE PATHET LAO, SOURCE HIMSELF WAS IM-  
PRISONED AT THIS SAME LOCATION ON 22 DECEMBER 1972. HE NOTED THAT  
THERE WERE A TOTAL OF 15 AMERICANS STILL THERE INCLUDING THE THREE  
HE HAD BROUGHT EARLIER. ALTHOUGH PRISONERS WERE GENERALLY SEGREG-  
ATED BY NATIONALITY, THERE WERE TIMES WHEN THEY WERE ABLE TO MINGLE  
FREELY. AGAIN SOURCE RECALL OF DETAILS OF THE AMERICANS IS VAGUE.  
HE NOTED THAT THE AMERICANS APPEARED FAIRLY HEALTHY AND THAT THE  
MAN WITH THE WOUNDED ARM WAS HEALED. OF THE 15 AMERICANS, A FEW COULD  
SPEAK A LITTLE FRENCH, THERE WERE 3 OR 4 DARK-SKINNED INDIVID-  
UALS IN THE GROUP, SOME INDIVIDUALS HAD QUOTE GOLD UNQUOTE HAIR, SOME  
REDDISH BROWN HAIR. HE RECALLED THAT A COUPLE HAD TATOOS, ONE  
WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS A PICTURE OF FLOWERS ON THE SHOULDER. SOURCE

28

000352



Department of State **TELEGRAM**

PAGE 03 180842Z

DID NOT KNOW THE NAMES OF ANY OF THE AMERICANS, NOR DID HE RECALL ANY NAMES OR NICKNAMES BEING USED AMONG THE GROUP. IN JUNE 1973, SOURCE ESCAPED FROM THE PRISON AND DEFECTED TO THE ROYAL LAO FORCES. AT THE TIME OF HIS ESCAPE, ALL AMERICANS WERE STILL IN THE PRISON. ASKED IF HE HAD ANY IDEA WHAT WAS TO HAPPEN TO THE AMERICANS, SOURCE SAID IT WAS HIS UNDERSTANDING THEY WERE TO BE HELD FOR LATER BAR-GAINING LEVERAGE QUOTE WHEN THE WAR WAS OVER UNQUOTE. WHEN ASKED ABOUT THE TREATMENT OF THE AMERICAN PRISONERS, SOURCE SAID THE PRISONERS WERE GIVEN SUFFICIENT FOOD TO STAY ALIVE AND WERE NOT TORTURED. HOWEVER, THE NON-AMERICAN PRISONERS WERE LECTURED OCCASIONALLY ON HOW QUOTE BAD UNQUOTE THE AMERICANS WERE ESPECIALLY REGARDING THE BOMBING. SOURCE MENTIONED THAT THE AMERICANS' DIFFICULTIES WERE COMPOUNDED BY THEIR LACK OF ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE WITH THEIR GUARDS AS WELL AS OTHER PRISONERS EXCEPT THROUGH A BASIC PRIMITIVE FRENCH. 6. QUESTIONED CONCERNING ANY OTHER KNOWLEDGE REGARDING AMERICANS, SOURCE RELATED THAT HE HAD SEEN A CRASH SITE IN SARAVANE PROVINCE NEAR BANG NONG LAO (UNDEFINED LOCATION WEST OF SARAVANE). THE CRASH HAD OCCURRED ON 1 OR 2 DECEMBER 1972. THE PLANE HAD EXPLODED BEFORE HITTING THE GROUND. PARTS OF QUOTE FIVE UNQUOTE BODIES WERE FOUND AMONG THE DEBRIS AND WERE BURIED NEAR THE CRASH SITE. ON ANOTHER OCCASION, SOURCE HAD SEEN AIRCRAFT WRECKAGE NEAR BAN SAE (LOCATION NOT DEFINED) BUT HE WAS ADVISED THAT THE AMERICANS HAD ARRIVED FIRST AND RESCUED THE FLYERS. 7. REGARDING POLICY CONCERNING PRISONERS, SOURCE SAID ORDERS WERE GIVEN FROM HIGHER HEADQUARTERS DIRECTING ALL SOLDIERS TO TAKE PRISONERS ALIVE WHENEVER POSSIBLE. SOURCE CLAIMS HOWEVER THAT IN FACT PATHET LAO GUERRILLA UNITS OPERATED WITH CONSIDERABLE AUTONOMY AND WITHOUT EXTENSIVE SUPERVISION. THEREFORE, IN PRACTICE, ACCORDING TO SOURCE, GUERRILLA UNITS EXECUTED PRISONERS AT THEIR POINT OF CAPTURE WHILE REGULAR UNITS WOULD (MIGHT) TAKE PRISONERS. THE PATHET LAO UNIT WHICH CAPTURED THE THREE AMERICAN FLYERS WAS UNDER THE CONTROL OF A VIETNAMESE OFFICER. SOURCE BOSS LIKEWISE WAS A VIETNAMESE OFFICER. 8. COMMENT: SOURCE APPEARED TO BE EARNEST AND STRAIGHTFORWARD IN THIS INTERVIEW. HE WAS NOT EVASIVE AND NO CONTRADICTIONS COULD BE FOUND IN HIS STORY ALTHOUGH ATTEMPTS WERE MADE TO TEST THE CONSISTENCY OF HIS STORY. SOURCE IS PRESENTLY LIVING IN SOURCE DATA BUT HAS INDICATED NO DESIRE TO GO TO THE UNITED STATES AND HAS SOUGHT NO FAVORS FROM THE AMERICAN PERSONNEL WORKING THERE. HE

SPENDS A CONSIDERABLE TIME AWAY FROM THE CAMP IN THE COMPANY OF

29



Department of State **TELEGRAM**

PAGE 04 180842Z

THAT PSYWAR UNITS TALKING TO THAI VILLAGERS REGARDING THE COMMUNISTS. SOURCE FURNISHED THE NAMES OF FOUR OTHER FORMER PL WHO HE CLAIMS COULD SUBSTANTIATE HIS STORY OF THE THREE AMERICANS. THESE FOUR ARE INVOLVED IN THE LAO RESISTANCE MOVEMENT, BUT SOURCE CLAIMS THAT GIVEN ENOUGH TIME IN THE UBON AREA, HE COULD LOCATE THEM. SOURCE SPEAKS NO ENGLISH, LITTLE FRENCH, SOME VIETNAMESE, AND IS FLUENT IN THAI.

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