

~~PRO SENSITIVE - PROTECT~~

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

November 25, 1983

NOTE FOR: COL. MARK RICHARDS
DIA
1C760, The Pentagon

JOHN MONJO
DAS/EA&PA
6208 State

RICH ARMITAGE
ASD/ISA
4E808, The Pentagon

JAMES A. KELLY
DASD/EA&PA
4E817, The Pentagon

COL. LEE J. ELWELL
JCS, J-5
2E973, The Pentagon

The attached notes from an executive session of the Board of the NLF are not supposed to have been taken, much less distributed to government officials. Ann has taken this risk for the best interest of the issue, but they should be treated as very sensitive for she would be in obvious jeopardy should it become known.

Rich Childress
RICHARD T. CHILDRESS

PROTECT

Attachments
Notes
NLF Memo dated 11/19/83

Hopper:

In introduction of Hendon (H), stated spent last weekend in N. Carolina; two days of talks with H. (Thurs. 11/10- Monday, 11/14).

- H has very strong information, earthshaking.
- Either biggest liar or the information will "blow open the issue"
- E certain H is not a liar.
- E feels the same about Billy as Ben Gilman.
- H arrived Thursday, in D.C., at his own expense, and cooled heels in Gilman's office to meet with Task Force (TF) and USG - then only Gilman, Lago and staff members were present.
- E disappointed at no USG representatives, that they did not have the courage and "guts" to listen.
- Asked board to listen and have open minds, claimed that H had not given him any classified data, sources, methods of collection.

Hendon:

- Doesn't claim to be among friends but that he feels he is a friend to us.
- Comes from a good perspective, new boy on block but has been a MC, ex-officio member of the TF, worked within the USG at the Pentagon for 6 months.
- At board meeting to be candid, cares deeply about the issue, USG should be candid but is not.
- Took 6 trips to SEA, 4 times with Le Bout, two alone in July '82 and November '82.
- Has seen what very few in Congress and the Admin. have seen as member of the bureaucracy (at Pentagon).
- Accomplished significant things in Laos, consultant for POW/MIA affairs while at the Pentagon.
- Speech in NC on Veterans Day, as reported in the Ashville Citizen.
- Doesn't want 20 years to pass, POW/MIA families to come to him and he be accused of knowing POWs are alive in captivity and he did nothing.
- USG currently doing what was done in the assassination of JFK, using politically, covering up.
- Claims to be biggest Reagan supporter, President sincere in actions, emotions and beliefs - H briefed the President a long time ago.
- RR can't make this happen - bureaucracy is the problem.

- Does anyone believe Carter would have ~~permitted~~ had known, if he had seen the telegram quoting a Vietnamese official as stating that they are holding PW's, that these PW's are a problem for the Vietnamese since they are attempting to get into the UN. An SRV official said this during the Carter Presidency.

- Knows or would bet Carter did not know that the telegram existed

- stated that he had this cable in his possession that he had seen it, it exists - Gilman will look at this telegram, "that a foreign official of a friendly government had stated that the Vietnamese official had told him this."

AMG: Are you currently discussing classified data?

H: Yes, I am.

AMG: You have no reluctance to do so in this forum?

H: None at all.

H: Stated that RADM Paulson and people from DIE2 (BIC2) met late in the evening, informally with he and Le Bout. During one of these sessions, H had questioned whether they believed POWs were being held. RADM P stated that he thinks about 50 were being held. Billy stated he thought as many as 2 or 3 times that number and P stated, no about 50.

- H set up meeting with the President for he and Le Bout. Asked P to be at his office at 2:00 p.m. with Kennedy, then requested P to go with he and Le Bout to tell the President.

- P refused and said he would get fired.

- H stated careers are on the line all the time.

- P denied ever having stated that 50 POWs were probably held and refused to go.

- Le Bout and H went alone, believes in the President, President feels the same as "we" do about POWs.

H: USG has known for a long time, without a shadow of a doubt, that POWs are held in downtown Hanoi.

E: Do you mean the mortician?

H: No, not Loc (classified information, named source). "Take this down, 17C Ly Nam De Street, believed the Army Arts and Letters Publications Office. Last year, men were sighted there for the second time. Polygraphed and confirmed as telling the truth. Sighted in 1978 and 1982 and the sources gave the exact street address. The source was told they were American Pilots.

H: And guess what? The USG can't find the place - isn't that strange? These men were sighted, twice, and the report came from another intelligence agency. DIA made a great effort to debunk.

- When DIA could not debunk, they polygraphed - then when the source passed the poly, DIA said it was ill-administered, faulty, and would not tell H the results, or why.
- Stated questions were: "Did you see American POWs at the point noted? Answer - yes, no deception." Were you told they were Americans? Answer - yes, no deception." Did you see them in 1978 and 1982? Answer - yes, no deception."
- And guess what, folks? The problem, reason it was faulty, two dates were asked at the same time.
- These men are still there. What do we do? Or the USG? Do we ignore?
- Here the USG has two sources, separate - Loc was polygraphed, passed and this source - both considered valid.
- League should not buy this anymore. The evidence is overwhelming!

Nystrom: Have you apprised President Reagan of this?

H: No, a mere consultant in the Pentagon, you don't just walk in to see the President. The bureaucracy only has to say H is crazy. They are committed to keeping this underwraps.

- went into "history" of Roger Shields, played on the League's previous experience with withholding of information, deceitfulness from USG, Clements' statements, claimed Roger was threatened with being fired if he exposed information on live POWs. H believes Nixon tried to get Congress to give him the funding to get out the remaining POWs - thinks Nixon, Shields, Kissinger thought in time they would be able to get the rest out. Went on for some time along this line.

Brooks: - Did Nixon know men were still there?

H: In my opinion, yes. I think it was common knowledge, believed they thought they could get the rest out.

- Claims classified, but nothing to do with national defense so no reluctance to tell the board. § _____, Propaganda Minister of Laos stated, Within _____, we are holding Thai and US POWs and will hold them until "all agreements are fulfilled," June of 1974.
- Inman told him that there was no question in his mind that guys were left behind, but that he doesn't think any are still alive.
- H questioned Inman, "Are you telling me something?"
- Claims when the PRC went into northern Vietnam, there were reports, on top of reports, on top of reports, of Americans being moved south.
- H in a unique position, working on POW/MIA data, 5 days/week, for 5 months - no other job, the story is devastating.
- RACH GIA: H says nine sources - couple of jails, found this much he won't tell, but

nine reports from one town - not unique (nine reports on one general area).

- Nine sources: one guard in the prison (opined a boar person now out); one employee of the prison - Clerk - who saw the US POWs; four were in the prison/jail; two saw the Americans being taken to the prison; and one "little" lady taking food to her husband said she saw two guys, tied (with arms behind their back and drawn up) being taken into the prison and their guards said "We have the Americans."
- H then drew a sketch on the blackboard of Kratie province in Cambodia, very rough, of eight locations of sightings in that area and one in western Cambodia. Says the eight were debunked deliberately by DIA and then the other (separate) sighting was debunked because "there are no sightings that side of the Mekong."
- Another example (of deliberate debunking by DIA) a team was sent in, hired by the US, to search for an aircraft downed in 1973 (Martin) in an F4. The source reported back that two Americans bailed out near Kratie, were seen walking north. The USG (indicating DIA) would not accept the source report as valid because the source "knew what he was looking for when he went in."
- The USG, these SOB's - the League has allowed this kind of thing to happen for over 10 years.
- If a source reports someone dead, it is accepted as valid. If live sighting, inconclusive or invalid. Asked DIA, what does it take? You have nine sources on one sighting.
- Said ask Trowbridge for his 14 Sept. 1979 letter to John Fer, #U56292/DB4, page 8, paragraph 4. Unclassified - stated identification of the individual still in VN is not possible.
- Said ask for "undated DOD evaluation of US POW/MIA information provided by a Pathet Lao defector. Source said PL guard came out and Thai intelligence picked this up. PL said "I've been guarding a bunch of US pilots in Muong Et (??) near Sam Neua, and one of their names is _____ . I checked that name and it checks out.

Parsels: - Anyone could have picked up a name from the list. (H went into a dialogue of believe them if you want, I'm telling you the name is on that list, attempting to cast Parsels in the role of believing the USG.)

H: In Bangkok, JCRC - Mather was approached by the Thai, excited, attempting to match name. More than one, so Mather said that guy is dead.

- H started checking and found the list did not indicate the guy was dead.
- The back seater of the named pilot came back, said wasn't sure if the pilot was alive or dead, but if he got out, maybe the pilot did also.
- Now ten years later, a PL defector - said "I've been guarding

a guy named (boom) - Back seater shows up in Hanoi, ten years later, this source surfaces.

- Mather pulls out photos, source ID's re-POW - source debunked.
- H claimed that USG routinely uses "distractor" photos and tried to portray this as deliberate "debunking" by the USG.
- If source picks the right photo, he must be polygraphed. If the wrong photo, immediately debunked by USG.
- These "stumbling blocks" will tumble. The current USG effort is "bull." We're working on changing that, getting rid of -obstacles.
- The "system" mandates the current effort. The question is do you want to go through this same charade for another 10 years?

Parsels: Is there one agency responsible? At DOD some of the guys there flew with the POWs, can't believe they would deliberately know about existence of POWs and do nothing. Can't believe Venanzi would accept this, regardless of career, not to let his own guys stay POW, at expense of their lives.

H: If poly'd source does not prove this to you, we're on different wave lengths.

Parsels: Would take more than one source poly'd to rationally take decisive action.

H: Rach Gia and Kratie are examples of intelligence analyses. THIS GOVERNMENT IS NEVER GOING TO BRING THESE MEN OUT UNTIL FORCED.

Nystrom: What happens to valid intelligence?

H: Nothing, USG will not comment or deny. Operations begin and end in DIA. Intelligence to support operations or not enough to support. DIA is the judge, jury and, sad to say, executioner.

Nystrom: Who has the final say?

H: Williams, then to the policy people. The League has allowed "them" to frame the questions. Why? (Reference to Congressional hearings and inability to get questions asked in the manner suggested.)

Hart: What are we supposed to do to change all this?

Sullivan: What can we do, presuming what you say is true?

H: Get Gilman and Lagonmarsino to screen, investigate.

Sullivan: That is what they are supposed to do, what their purpose is.

H: Only he and Le Bout really took the time -smelled rotten and they dug into the problems.

- What about the radio intercept? Confirmed by two intelligence agencies, saw this while in Congress. The message said, "We are moving the Americans south."

- Opinion, he has seen the pictures - Ft. Apache, :52: and "the guys" acted on the radio intercept, in his opinion.
- In the elevators of Congress, he heard about this intercept.
- What he has now is new, hot stuff, confirmed by H and two intelligence agencies.
- You should read the real Swedish papermill report. Go tell Gilman and ask him to review. If the USG is lying, want changes made.
- Swedish intelligence interviewed wives of men who saw white faces - the men had sent letters to their wives including this information.
- Swedish Charge' in Vientiane stated that a bunch of Vietnamese would go to Bai Bang, then return to the camp location - reports came out in that manner.

Sullivan: - How can Gilman get these reports?

H: He can subpoena, with Solarz.

K. Parsels: What do you plan to do from here?

H: Rather not comment. He has had it with "these people." He will win.

E: Will you testify under oath?

H: Yea. If the US Congress knows the League is seriously concerned, they will pursue, responding to pressure.

E: Does Gilman believe all this?

H: Does not know.

Hart: Do you think any circumstances exist which preclude using positive proof and if so, would you inform the families or withhold such information? (This was asked to get a feel of how H thinks.)

H: Would probably go along with the "company line" if he thought it (recovery of POWs) was not realistic. In this case, if the USG decides they will come home, they will.

Brooks: What would Gen. Williams think about his life, his integrity if he withheld such information (positive proof) and did not act? Can't believe he would do such a thing.

H: Can you imagine previous political decisions which affect the military? (Gave examples of ordering USMC to "guard" without ammunition.)

Brooks: You claim this is a conspiracy - then who, DIA?

H: Great confidence in the CIA, their intelligence effort on this issue. CIA does a good job, though nearly destroyed by Church. If CIA were handling, he'd believe in them.

Is the conspiracy just DIA? What about NSC?

The League can choose to believe or not- your decision.

- Phoumi report - coming out, coming out, DIA saying this time. they think Phoumi's got one.
- John McQuethy (sp?) claimed maybe, but they are deserters.
- Told by State and DIA that Phoumi is valid.
- He and Le Bout took TV crew to Bangkok, did this to make sure the POW would not be labeled a deserter.

Sullivan: Went back to the named POW and stated he should tell the families.

H: Not my business to do so.

Hart: Wrong! Sullivan: Wrong! Unfair to the families.

H: Admired Gritz for one thing - stated not doing this for the families but for the men, has a difficult time playing God, smart guy.

Kay B: Why the reservation to tell the family?

H: League should go "up the river" and tell them to inform family.

Kay B: How do we get to them? Get mad, let it be known? ""

H: He agreed to re-think this question. (Comment: Several on the board were appalled to think H would consider notification on the basis of unconfirmed report.)

Parsels: If a report discusses a name, the family should be told.

H: Ok, he'll go to the lady, requested a complete list of the families.

- The USG will say he is full of bull - calling the families. Maybe callous but thinking of the men, not the families. Get the guys home first, then worry about the families, deceased after that and their families.

- This is not like 1968, 69 or 70 - these men are surviving by being kept alive.

- An unimpeachable source says in the late '70's he saw 5-6 POWs being lead away - in Laos. Source asked the guards, French or Soviet? He was told these are Americans. "We have 50 we are holding for money."

Brooks: Why doesn't the President know what you're doing?

H: He does, very sympathetic to Le Bout and H's efforts. A strong indication of that support was that he was reimbursed for his work, retroactively - some \$15,000, had DAO plane at disposal.

- League was told in January, medicine sent to Laos, was gobbled

- You're familiar with Aderholt's article in SOF? Puzzled by the July 14th reference to this. Unnamed source said medicine went to the Vietnamese - brakes came onto the Lao initiative.
- In July, H was squired around Laos by the Vice Minister of Public Health - a doctor during the war. Dr. hates Americans. H asked for his help. Dr. gave him list of medicines, written in French.
- "Like Sou Bonh said, need reciprocity." Dr. stated has people starving and dying in all provinces, has people there who would help if we help them.
- H agreed to help. July trip a good trip - his best. The list was "costed out" by USG at \$300,000 but was denied as it would be diverted to Cambodia for the summer offensive.
- Says he thinks it good to "squeeze the little bastards" and keep the pressure on them. Tough luck for them. They shouldn't have chosen communism.
- The another doctor comes out of Laos, connected with the Vice Min. of Public Health - high level Lao family, in charge of POW health care during the war, showed H where POWs were cared for after the war. (Dr. Boun Dhak P(D)heddara)
- Weeps for these men. One of "big 5" intelligence reports: 43 American POWs - a report that a guy has seen a list of them. The source who had the list was head of the POW system in Laos.
- H claimed again that USG is "doing a number on the League."

Brooks: Have you had the DIA briefing as a member of the Congress?

H: Yes, but it was not significant enough to get men home. His briefing will be. Commented that being a member of Cong. is the most rigorous, difficult job you can imagine, but he will try for reelection.

Brooks: Should the DIA briefing not have generated interest?

H: Told Tuttle the Ft. Apache photos were bull. Tuttle talked too much and "they" nailed him for being too positive.

Brooks/
Nystrom: Who is "they"?

H: Go to Congress, let them investigate. Gilman said in front of you Earl, he'll get the documents.

H: Recommends - let "them" know you're mad, go after "them!"

Brooks: Is Le Bout working with you?

H: Asked John to come but at last minute he couldn't make it. He and Le Bout had difference on approach, but good friends.

E: Is there anyone else?

make political, suggest negative

Anyone? Shields? Someone?

Can't be worried about that.

Sullivan: Asked about his comments concerning USG undermining the Lao initiatives.

Brooks: Why are you doing this?

H: Candor and sincerity: - has tried with Congress. He and Le Bout opened by Laos. H was asked (by the Lao) to go on the League trip but did not have enough notice. H fought the bureaucracy the entire way but succeeded. Lao initiatives on the road - he had commitment from Congress to lift the aid ban - the step to get into crash sites. Certain parties, in and outside of the USG, stopped this. The US raised the ante, again and again. Lao refused Armitage trip - let in JCRC, US raised ante. USG ruined the Lao initiative. Le Bout and H had something going, then forces in the USG stopped the initiative.

- When questioned what he meant by raised the ante. H stated, "you (Lao) do this and we'll do that. You do this, and we'll do the same that," again and again promising to take action then going back to the Lao without following through as promised. Termed DISGRACEFUL.

Brooks: Who is orchestrating this?

H: Could discuss but won't help the men at this time.

Nystrom: You sound like the government.

H: Take my word for it.

Nystrom: You still sound like the government.

Sullivan: If you won't tell us who is responsible, how do we get the situation changed?

H: THERE IS A COVER UP IN THIS GOVERNMENT. THEY HAVE KNOWN ABOUT POWS FOR A LONG TIME AND NOTHING WILL BE DONE.

Parsels: (Back to providing the name of the POW). Suggested H go to the gov't and tell them the board's feeling (objections raised here by several members of the board), that H will tell the family if the gov't does not. Added that he hopes H has a list of the documents to support his claims - people in the past have been convincing and believed. Hopes Task Force will subpoena for testimony.

H: Hopes so too, welcomes the challenge.

K. Parsels: Plans? Congress? Media? Going to drop bomb?

H: Both of these and others. Bomb dropped here today. Without trying to be cute, knows how Congress works, respond to public heat, pressure, votes. (last word supplied by Hart.)

USG responds to people. Believes "we" (League and Hendon) has to do something -

Will tell his story to the American people - court of
of last resort, good as gold, won't turn backs when they
know the story.

K. Parsels: Will this become a "debate-gate"? Will we wake up to a
surprise one morning. What is your approach going to be?
The League needs to be prepared.

Hart: You've given us information that will keep us awake nights-
only the rest of our lives - either prove or disprove it.

H: Go to the Hill. Get Gilman and Solarz to go after it.

Nystrom: What do I tell Charlie Bennett?

H: Bennett can find out if Hendon is lying or not. Tell him
to call Solarz - say a "crazy woman is on his hands and wants
this investigated."

K. Parsels: Do you want the League to go to the press?

H: No. Get Gilman to put the USG under oath, on the stand.
Gilman knows - they've been lying and he (Gilman) won't like
it. Gilman and Lago both said "I didn't know this!" Earl
was there.

Brooks: What motivate Sonny?

H: Likes Sonny, honest, decent guy, honorable.

Brooks: Bull - Sonny debunked the mortician.

H: "We" let DIA get by with "claiming" the three POWs seen by
Loc were not classic POWs.

Brooks: How could Sonny say this - he has same information as you?

H: Gilman did not get this intelligence until 11/17, 5:00 p.m.
If Sonny had been told in 1976 an official, en route to the
airport in Vietnam was searched for an escaped US POW he
would not have reacted as he did.

Nystrom: Why don't you ask Sonny to check?

H: I will.

Kay B: You referenced AMG knowing about all of them - why wouldn't
Congress know, or others? President? Worried, is it your
(H's) opinion the League is being used, patronized, stroked?
H - did not wish to respond, said a politician too long to
answer that question.

Hart: Is the League being used? Doesn't mind being used if it gets
back POWs. (Kay B. pressed this question)

H: Does not want to speculate. He deals in facts.

Nystrom: You stated POWs will come out.

H: POWs could come out by Christmas if the USG decided so. The

~~Task force members - tell them here is something they can't~~
check on - POWERFUL STUFF. No Member of Cong. can turn his
back on such a challenge.

Sullivan: Will you tell Gilman who is responsible for this coverup?

H: Yes, if asked.

Sullivan: Have you told us all you know on this or is there more?

H: No, I'm not revealing everything, there is more.

Sullivan: Why didn't you tell us this until now?

H: "Worked hard on this - the time is right at present to resolve
this issue (Referenced Grenada) "We can press them. We
always knew we'd get a break. This is it."

Brooks: If you were President tomorrow, what would you do?

H: Tough question. (Brooks pressed) H responded Reagan came to
the League in January 1983. Unknown to L and to RR, Mark
Richards was yanked out of DC2 and into Central America, in
spite of the President's pledge.

- Someone else, a nobody, says "the hell with the President's
priority, we need him." President not aware, but it
happened. Knows Mark is with "us" on this issue. Judge
Clark is with us and so is the President.

- H and Le Bout always said, the biggest problem is not $\frac{1}{2}$
the world away but $\frac{1}{2}$ the city away at State and DOD.

Hesterman: Did you have access to all USG efforts on this issue?

H: No, and don't fall for that line that there are "very
sensitive" negotiations going on." Everyone in the USG
knows "its coming."

- DIA hired Carol Bates (claimed she is a good friend) to be
their spokesman in preparation for his (change of coverup)
Also hired Jack Kull for this reason - to put them out front
and give credibility to claims that H is crazy.

H: Left DOD by choice, could have stayed there as long as he
wished.

- The Bangkok statements (June 1983), on live POWs and options,
were in reaction to his efforts.

- If we don't do something, it won't be done. That's it, all
he has to say.

Parsels: Waited 11 months since President pledged highest national
priority.

Nystrom: You stated something significant - pulled out Richards. Who?

H: Not the President. There is overwhelming evidence of a
coverup, malfeasance, deceit, incompetence, conspiracy,
ineptness.....

Nystrom: Tuttle was pulled out too? Incredible

Hendon departed after this and Childress/Le Boutiller were requested to participate in following executive session.