

Ch 23 C05 CALMNER 49B-1

20 SEP 84

Refugee source Source claims to have observed two Caucasians while having been imprisoned in Thanh Hoa Province during the period 1979-1981. SC was interviewed on three separate occasions by CIA and JCRC personnel as follows:

CIA FIR 317/09225-83 reported that a Source, born 4 Jul 1960 in Quang Ninh Province, northern SRV, stated he saw in late 1980 or early 1981 two Caucasians brought by jeep to the Cam Thuy Detention Center near Cam Thuy Village, Thanh Hoa Province, SRV. As of early July 1981, according to the two were still at the camp. The Caucasians wore camouflage fatigues with boots and had blond hair and blue eyes. Source said a former ARVN officer held at the camp said the Caucasians were U.S. Advisors who had worked with the ARVN. The Americans were kept in a fenced cubicle in whose yard was a ping-pong table. The Americans were never observed using it but were allowed to rest in front of their cubicle.

The camp, purportedly located in a valley about 2 hours walk east of Cam Thuy Village, was divided in to a number of zones which were located on opposite banks of the Cau Chay River.

JCRC Bangkok interviewed SC on 4 January 1984. He said he had been arrested for resisting Communist authorities and was sentenced to 36 months in what he now referred to as Lam Son prison in Thanh Hoa Province which SC stated was near Cam Thuy Village in the vicinity of the Cau Chay River. In 1979 he saw a truck enter the camp with two prisoners but he could not see into the truck because the windows were covered. When the truck stopped, he observed two men in camouflage fatigues who had lighter hair and skin than the Vietnamese. He could not see them clearly due to the distance. SC fellow prisoner, a Col SSC in a response to SC questioning, said that the prisoners were probably Americans. A few days later from a distance SC saw the men for the last time.

He further stated that the two foreigners were held at Section D, a separate compound of the camp. He saw them only twice, as stated above, in 1979 for brief moments, as he was not allowed to enter the camp.

Again on 5 June 1984, SC was interviewed and provided additional sketches of the camp areas. This time he described the foreigners as being dark complected with hairy arms and wearing camouflage fatigues which were too small. He also indicated that he observed two foreigners many times sitting inside a compound within the camp. SC said that he entered the compound several times while at the camp but was himself held in an area outside the compound and near its entrance. The perimeter of the compound was a wall about the "height of 3 people" and was topped with barbed wire. A guard tower was located at each corner.

Ch 23 CU 5 CALMINER 49B-2

The prison complex SC described is the Lam Son Prison located in former Cam Thuy District, Thanh Hoa Province (northern Vietnam) approximately 150 km south of Hanoi. The camp consists of 3 sites or compounds situated south of a mountainous area. The compounds are approximately 1500 to 2000 meters apart and form a triangle divided by the Song Bea (river). Each compound is a walled facility with an adjacent administrative area.

As early as December 1958 several sources reported the complex held political prisoners who had been imprisoned since 1953. Prior to 1976 the prison was administered by the Ministry of Security of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and used as a model or experimental camp for its production program. The Ministry of the Interior of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam now operates the complex.

Interviewers attempted to obtain a detailed description and sketches of the prison. Although SC claimed to have been held here for an extended time, he was unable to describe the basic features he should have used or seen daily or frequently. Other refugees reporting on the interiors of such camps are able to recall and describe such items as latrines, mess areas, wells and generators which they used and saw on a daily basis. SC reporting suggests only superficial knowledge available to any person who lived nearby, or passed through the area.

JCRC reports that the interviewer found it very difficult to understand who would not respond directly to questions and who constantly changed the subject. His three interviews produced stories which contained conflicting and contradictory information. For example, his description of the Americans progressed from "blond hair and blue eyes," to "light skin" or "lighter than Vietnamese," to "dark complected with hairy arms."

CONCLUSION:

DIA has not yet made a definitive judgement, although there is no cause for encouragement. DIA has tasked JCRC to locate other refugees who have spent time in or near the facility during the time frame of SC allegations to obtain information which could confirm or refute SC story. DIA will reevaluate SC story in the light of any new information.