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A Wound That Won't Heal

The final report of the Senate Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs covers much but has finalized little. Though headlines in major newspapers and network news blurbs would have you believe otherwise, the conclusions the panel reached in its mid-January analysis were far from cut-and-dried. "Senate Study on Vietnam-War Captives Concludes No U.S. POWs Remain Alive," read the headline in the **Wall Street Journal**. A January 14th New York Times editorial declared that the 1,000-plus page report "should dispel suspicions of a U.S. Government conspiracy or cover-up." And the **Washington Post**, in an editorial called "Putting the MIA Issue Behind," contended the committee had wrapped up "an inquiry that has roiled the national conscience and national politics for 20 years."

But neither is the issue dead nor the report decisive.

While officials from the Nixon, Ford, and Carter Administrations had dismissed even the possibility that American POWs survived after Operation Homecoming in 1973, the Select Committee stated that it "has uncovered evidence that precludes it from taking the same view. We acknowledge that there is no proof that U.S. POWs survived, but neither is there proof that all of those who did not return had died. There is evidence, moreover, that indicates the *possibility* of survival, at least for a small number, after Operation Homecoming..." [emphasis in original].

The latter evidence includes Americans known to have been alive in captivity who did not return; those whom the Pathet Lao claimed to have been holding throughout the war, with many of the claims validated; prisoners so thoroughly believed to have been held in Laos that U.S. military action was contemplated to gain their release; and intelligence information, accumulated over two decades, including countless live-sightings of Americans POWs.

The Select Committee as a whole did conclude that "while some information remains yet to be investigated, there is, at this time, no compelling evidence that proves that any American remains alive in captivity in Southeast Asia." It does not take a Philadelphia lawyer to spot the loopholes in that conclusion. Moreover, the committee's stalwarts on this issue, Senator Bob Smith (R-NH), the vice chairman of the panel, and Senator Charles Grassley (R-IA), specifically dissented from the report's determination that live-sightings and other intelligence discouraged the idea of survivors — because "they believe that live-sighting reports and other sources of intelligence *are* evidence that POWs may have survived to the present."

Rewriting History

Not only were there very different interpretations about what the committee found, but the committee report itself was changed repeatedly in tone and content. Even at the last minute, in one particularly egregious case, former Secretary of State and National Security Adviser Henry



Kissinger was allowed access to the committee's final report — so he could adjust it more to his liking. Kissinger, according to an account in the **Los Angeles Times**, talked frequently to committee personnel to try to rebut points with which he disagreed. Criticism of both Kissinger and Richard Nixon was minimized after Kissinger's attorney Lloyd Cutler was allowed to read part of the committee draft; they succeeded in having sections of it changed.

It was the Nixon/Kissinger Administration that emphasized that all our POWs were supposedly returned, and played down the fact that men were knowingly left behind. And the same folks who did the abandoning have now been allowed to put themselves in a better light — even to the extent of deleting from the final report sworn statements by a secretary of defense from the Nixon Administration. As the **Washington Post** put it:

Kissinger's Washington lawyer, Lloyd Cutler, objected strongly to a draft of the report that relied on testimony from former defense secretary James R. Schlesinger that Kissinger knew prisoners might remain in Laos. Quoting Schlesinger "serves little purpose except to demonstrate his dislike of his former colleagues and the bias of whoever wrote this section," Cutler said. Schlesinger is mentioned only briefly, without quotation, in the final version

Actually, there are still a few of Schlesinger's quotations tucked back in the annex of the report, including his September 1992 statement that he believed men were left behind.

Most serious observers of the issue insist that the federal government did indeed abandon some of our men. The committee itself acknowledges that the government left when it believed men to be in Southeast Asia and was even carrying some as POWs in its records. Yet the committee somehow manages to conclude that American POWs were not "knowingly abandoned."

Some of the semantics smack of cruel and begrudging pettifoggery, not candor about soldiers who did their duty and were deserted by their country. The original draft of the report read as follows: "American officials did not have *certain knowledge* [emphasis in original] that any specific prisoner or prisoners were being left behind. But there remains the troubling question of whether the Americans who were expected to return but did not were, as a group, shunted aside and discounted by government and population alike. The answer to that is essentially yes *and it is in this sense that a form of abandonment did take place*" [emphasis added]. Yet, the last words we have italicized -as constrained as they were — were dropped from the final report. To be merely *shunted aside* and *discounted*, rather than also *abandoned*, must be cold comfort to U.S. fighting men who have been forsaken.

Kissinger on the one hand contended that the American side did not "know there were any live Americans kept in Indochina," yet on the other hand said that some prisoners "may have been kept behind by our adversaries in violation of solemn commitments. No prisoners were left behind by the deliberate act or negligent omission of American officials."

Senator John McCain (R-AZ), a former POW in Vietnam who is no favorite of the POW activist community, referred to the report as the "whole and unvarnished truth." McCain did his utmost to put down those who suggested evidence indicated there might yet be living Americans held in Southeast Asia. Yet even the report does not claim omniscience for itself, acknowledging that it



was meant to open doors, not close them, on the issue.

Twenty Years After

Former vice chairman Bob Smith, on January 27, 1993, the 20th anniversary of the signing of the Paris Peace Accords with North Vietnam, reminded his Senate colleagues that, despite the work of the committee (which has now gone out of business), communist Vietnam has still not fulfilled its promises: “Twenty years later we still have not achieved the fullest possible accounting of our captured and missing personnel.” One expects communists to act like communists; one hopes for better from the American government, a hope that has been frequently misplaced.

Indeed, during the hearings last fall, Senate aides pointed out that Bush Administration officials had continued to mislead, citing the testimony of Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Kenneth Quinn. He had testified (and been backed up in the assessment by top officials with the Department of Defense and Defense Intelligence Agency) that “he was not aware of any judgment at any time in the executive branch that there were Americans left behind in Laos or Cambodia.” Yet, Defense Secretaries Schlesinger and Melvin Laird told the committee that the government did believe men were left as the U.S. withdrew from Indochina. Moreover, as Senate aides informed senators in an internal memo, the hearings had established “that Defense Department officials believed in 1973 that over 1,300 men were left behind in Laos and Vietnam, including some known to be POWs.”

It is regrettably true that Cambodia became a killing field for Pol Pot’s regime, so the likelihood of survival diminished markedly there. Nevertheless, as the committee acknowledges, none of the Americans ever held captive for a significant period of time in Laos were returned (other than a handful transferred to the North Vietnamese in quick fashion). Richard Nixon himself sent a cable to North Vietnam’s Prime Minister Pham Van Dong in February 1973 saying, “U.S. records show there are 317 American military men unaccounted for in Laos and it is inconceivable that only ten of these men would be held prisoner in Laos.” Currently, there are more than 500 Americans listed as unaccounted for in Laos, a number which includes 335 who were once carried as either POW or MIA by the U.S. government.

Indeed, as Senator Smith indicates, he and Senator Grassley continue to believe that there is the strong possibility that some American POWs could be alive. Grassley points in particular to a specific case, where an expert hired by the committee found and identified a classified distress signal that corresponded to a specific MIA — only 400 feet from the Dong Vai prison facility in Vietnam in *June 1992*. The MIA corresponding to the primary and back-up distress signal and authenticator number (GX 2527) had been shot down in Laos in 1969. While the expert was “100 percent certain” of this identification marking, others disagreed, and representatives from the U.S. intelligence community argued that the symbols could not have been man-made. The expert also found nearby the marking of a name, and assigned a “70 percent” confidence in this signal. In this one case, the conservatives on the committee prevailed and the committee directed that the Executive Branch follow up with Hanoi about the pilot in question.



It is the judgment of former vice chairman Bob Smith “that many of the live-sighting reports of Americans in captivity are compelling and appear credible. The sheer volume of this evidence cannot be summarily dismissed when one considers the fact that in Laos alone, we have not visited any detention facilities.” Yet live-sightings reports have been routinely dismissed by DIA analysts. Indeed, we are told by some who have participated directly in such attempted transactions that the DIA has turned away those who have come forward with information. It is spurious to claim that there is no authentic intelligence if it is paid for (sources, after all, may be risking imprisonment or death). Informants sometimes do hope for recompense (which, after all, is the way of the world and exactly how the military has operated in matters of “blood chits” in Asia dating back to World War II). Yet not only has there been spurning in such instances, but also the rebuffing of informants who have been freely attempting to help the U.S.

Censoring and covering up has gone on for years. Testimony and documents released to the Select Committee show, for example, that in the 1970s the service secretaries wanted Deputy Secretary of Defense William Clements to reclassify men as POWs since they were known to have been alive in captivity. Clements refused to do so. Had not President Nixon declared that all POWs had come home?

There are certainly many kinds of motivations. Some military men, internal documents show, wanted to keep U.S. knowledge of live POWs quiet so as not to bring possible harm to the prisoners; they were assured that the POWs might be brought out at some future date, through a trade or a raid or other means. But the POWs never made it out — and time kept passing. Yet Washington’s denials that there could be live men for so many years had another toll. As explained by Thomas Burch, chairman of the National Vietnam Veterans Coalition, it became difficult to explain how the U.S. government “can effectively negotiate for the return of live prisoners when it lacks the confidence of its own negotiating position. Basically, they’re telling the Vietnamese they want information about live Americans at the same time they’re publicly saying that they’re all dead.”

Keeping the Lid On

When General Eugene Tighe’s 1986 comprehensive report concluded that the DIA had information that established “the strong possibility” (it had originally said probability) of American prisoners of war being held in Laos and Vietnam, that report was locked away and not declassified until mid-1992. Tighe, former director of the DIA, was publicly humiliated for his views; he also praised the refugee community — belittled by others — who provided so many live-sighting reports as “possibly the finest human intelligence database in the U.S. post-World War II experience.”

The Committee gave scant attention to those who made live-sighting reports. This dearth of eyewitnesses before the Select Committee — those who have actually reported seeing Americans captive in Indochina — bothered Diane Van Renselaar, the wife of an MIA. A former member of the board of the League of Families and currently with the Forget-Me-Not Association, Mrs. Van Renselaar is personally acquainted with refugees who have said they have first-hand knowledge of U.S. personnel left behind. She told THE NEW AMERICAN that one of the things that has



particularly bothered other POW family members is the perpetuation of lies, with some having come to believe that U.S. government policy is that POWs are “expendable” or “living casualties.”

Others critical of the final committee report noted the lack of cooperation from the Central Intelligence Agency and the inability of the National Security Agency to corroborate the analyses of their own personnel. Former NSA analysts nevertheless testified about their knowledge of prisoners and the widespread belief within their community that some prisoners in Southeast Asia had been shipped to the Soviet Union.

Criticism of DIA

The previously mentioned 1986 Tighe Report was not the only internal criticism of the DIA’s handling of the POW/MIA issue. For years the agency has been the focus of grievances about the way it handled its evaluations, and its long-classified records make it clear that suppression, at the very least, was prominent among DIA’s marching orders.

There really is a vested interest for people who have been telling the public for years there is no credible evidence of living American captives. Indeed, Colonel Millard Peck, who had been placed in charge of the issue by the Pentagon, resigned his position in charge of POW/MIAs in protest in 1991 rather than take part in the subterfuge; Peck said in his letter of resignation that “this issue is being controlled and a cover-up may be in progress.”

Other internal DIA critiques, declassified as a result of the Select Committee’s probe, included the Brooks Report (1985) and the Gaines Report (1986); even U.S. senators had been told the latter did not exist until declassification showed otherwise. Admiral Thomas Brooks, for example, found that the deeper he looked “the less professional the operation appeared. We had never employed some of the most basic analytic tools such as plotting all sightings on a map to look for patterns, concentrations, *etc.*”

These various reports showed: Obvious follow-up was ignored; there existed a “mindset to debunk” those who had seen Americans; and more than 600 live-sighting reports had been backlogged without evaluation. Words like “sloppy,” “haphazard,” and “wasteland” were typical of what the critiques found. Colonel Kimball Gaines observed in his review: “Intense effort is initially focused on veracity of sources with a view toward discrediting them. This penchant has overridden the seeking of the corroborative data necessary to support the sighting.”

The Select Committee agreed in its report that the POW/MIA office in the Defense Intelligence Agency has been “1) plagued by a lack of resources; 2) guilty of over-classification; 3) defensive toward criticism; 4) handicapped by poor coordination with other elements of the intelligence community; 5) slow to follow up on live-sighting and other reports; and 6) frequently distracted from its basic mission by the need to respond to outside pressure and requests.”

Just having a Select Committee in existence helped unearth valuable information about the missing and kept the issue alive in some media quarters, though in its report the committee ignored or down-played a great deal. Consider just a few accounts that would indicate that, yes, the communists acted like communists and that many U.S. officials long camouflaged this fact:



- Major General Jan Senja, who defected from his position as secretary of the Czech Defense Council in 1968, submitted a deposition to the Select Committee and reiterated in interviews (only alluded to in passing in the final report) that he had personal knowledge of the transfer of up to 90 U.S. POWs who passed through Prague on their way to the Soviet Union.
- Vietnam's ambassador to the UN, Nguyen Can, reportedly tried to defect to the U.S. with details about what he knew of American POWs left after the war and his government's policy of keeping such men. The ambassador was said to have been rebuffed in his offer to defect, and he is now reportedly back in Vietnam.
- The Select Committee voted not to subpoena former Secret Service agent John Syphrit, who reportedly overheard officials in the Reagan Administration discussing a U.S.-Vietnamese cash-for-prisoners swap in 1981. The Treasury Department, which runs the Secret Service, opposed allowing him to testify. Senator Grassley, who voted to subpoena the agent, said this "is one more instance in which this committee ... has caved in to the desires of the Executive Branch it was established to investigate."
- State Department documents from 1967 entitled "Captured U.S. Flyers in GDR [German Democratic Republic]" indicated that East Germany offered to trade American POWs it was holding for communist spies, according to a report appearing in the **Morning News Tribune** in Tacoma, Washington. East Germany was said to have U.S. prisoners in its hospitals. A corroborating story, which appeared in **The Sun** in Baltimore, said the trade was declined and quoted former Vietnamese Foreign Ministry official Lee Quang Khai as acknowledging that there were critical health cases that could not be treated by Hanoi who were sent to Eastern Bloc countries.
- Given short shrift by the report was a witness who had been an Army intelligence specialist who said that between 1973 and 1975 he personally saw and distributed messages about the transfer of Americans from Southeast Asia to East Germany. Barry Toll had briefed officers at the Joint Chiefs of Staff about such matters, saying that it was commonly held at the JCS and in the intelligence community that there were an estimated 290 to 340 POW/MIAs alive and held captive in Laos.
- Intelligence specialist Terry Minarcin told the Select Committee that he had tracked "special flights" of Soviet aircraft in 1977 that carried U.S. POWs to the USSR. The way this was played in the committee report was to say that it found no information to corroborate Minarcin.
- To a large extent, the report deprecated longtime NSA analyst Jerry Mooney's assertions concerning the prisoners of war that the top-secret agency had determined to be "Moscow Bound," after some valuable POWs were transported from Vietnam to Sam Neua in Laos. According to the NSA, Mooney's working files (he has reconstructed much from memory) were destroyed.
- Third-party intercepts were collected indicating possible U.S. POWs in Laos. For example: a 1979 intercept spoke of moving three U.S. prisoners to Muong Attoupeu to work in the mines; a 1980 intercept spoke of 20 American POWs about to go from Oudom Sai province to Vientiane; a 1984 intercept (which corresponded to another report of 23 Americans at a camp in southern Laos)



referred to the movement of 23 prisoners from Muong Sepone prison to the That Vang Center; and a 1986 intercept spoke of the movement of prisoners to Nong That. The committee report went out of its way to say that “none of the reports have been judged to be accurate by either the National Security Agency or the Defense Intelligence Agency.”

Other Victims

Though the committee spent most of its time on the war in Indochina, POWs unaccounted for in previous conflicts were also investigated. As it happens, in the fall of 1992, correspondence was publicized between Red China’s Mao Tse-tung, Soviet dictator Josef Stalin, and North Korean dictator Kim Il-Sung indicating that the Reds, at the behest of Mao, should hold back up to one-fifth of U.S. prisoners even after the Korean War ended. Sure enough, there were more than 8,000 Americans who did not come back.

Moreover, a national security aide to President Eisenhower, retired Army Colonel Philip Corso, told the committee and a news conference in Washington that he knew of at least “two train-loads of American prisoners — about a thousand men — taken to China and then switched to Russian trains and shipped into Siberia.” Eisenhower, said Corso, agreed with him that these Americans should be declared dead. Corso had given a congressional panel this information in the 1960s but it had been classified. The writing off of our men was no accident; it was American policy, the colonel indicated. Corso expressed surprise that the archives did not show more, for he pointed out that “there were actually hundreds of reports. The reports came from prisoner of war interrogation reports of North Koreans, prisoners of war, Chinese prisoners of war, and defectors, and some photographs that ... our reconnaissance planes took.”

Senator Smith produced information showing that the U.S. government had believed our men were still alive after the Korean War, and, until last fall, “kept that reality from the American people. It has covered up what it knew through a pattern of denial, misleading statements, and outright lies.” In December, Smith returned from North Korea, having obtained the startling admission from Pyongyang that hundreds of American POWs were shipped to Red China during the war and were never returned. The North Koreans also admitted that Red China ran POW camps in North Korea and Manchuria during the war. Some Americans, said the North Koreans, could also have been taken to the Soviet Union for interrogation. The committee, as vice chairman Smith recalled, firmly concluded that Communist China “surely has information on the fate of unaccounted for POWs from the Korean War.”

The Select Committee was split between those who wanted to terminate the issue of live POWs, and those who wanted to keep looking regardless of where the chips fell. The committee’s chairman, Senator John Kerry (D-MA), was assuredly not in the latter camp. Former POW Eugene “Red” McDaniel, a retired Navy captain who has labored long to gain accounting of fellow servicemen, is not alone in noting the committee was reluctant to get into the issue of living Americans. Senator Kerry, Captain McDaniel told THE NEW AMERICAN, was for lifting the trade embargo with Vietnam before the committee’s work, during it, and right now as well. Kerry also helped “script” the DIA for its testimony, McDaniel noted. Numerous press accounts have pointed



this out as well, and it was confirmed to us from inside the committee. Witnesses supposedly being cross-examined were actually coached in advance by Kerry's committee people.

The **Washington Times**, for example, reported that the Massachusetts Democrat advised the DIA how to rebut an NBC story about a 1988 photograph of an object on the ground that could have been a signal for rescuers. (There is suspicion that Kerry did exactly the same with the Vietnamese, telling the Reds what sorts of responses and gestures would be acceptable for U.S. consumption, to assist their chances for trade with the U.S.)

Captain McDaniel said that for all the committee did, it "stopped short" of answering all the questions that needed answering. The captain pointed to the lack of subpoena of the Secret Service agent and other matters concerning offers made by Vietnam to return POWs in exchange for reconstruction aid. He further noted the "stonewalling" on the issue by Reagan and Nixon.

The committee (primarily Kerry) attempted to smear Captain McDaniel and his American Defense Institute in its campaign of disparagement against some POW activist groups. The committee's report, for instance, claims that McDaniel refused to testify before the panel, yet we have obtained copies of correspondence to the committee's chief counsel demonstrating that McDaniel was more than willing to testify. In fact, the captain's cooperation with the committee at one point occasioned a letter from the panel commending him for his assistance.

The fact that senators were often not even present was obvious to those viewing the hearings. Less obvious was what went on behind the scenes. Words such as "unethical," even "crooked," were attached to Kerry's behavior by committee sources. Kerry's people had "drawn their conclusions" before the investigation started, one source told us, a point backed up by other observers. Senator McCain, we were told, "savaged" investigators who brought up intelligence that tended to support the fact that there may have been living Americans still captive in Indochina.

Consider also the author of a vital part of the report, a staffer personally selected by Senator Kerry, one Sedgwick Tourison. Tourison, a former DIA official, has repeatedly stated that no men were ever abandoned and, as noted in **Newsday** in January, not long ago told a columnist that the entire POW issue was a hoax. This was the individual Kerry put in charge of enumerating how many men may have been left behind and whether or not they might be alive.

On January 13th, when the Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs issued its final report, Senator Chuck Grassley indicated that he considered that day to be the first day of the U.S. government's new effort to press for a full accounting of our men. Senator Smith hopes that Bill Clinton will appoint a presidential designee to monitor POW/MIA accounting efforts by the U.S. government. That's the least that should be done.

A Loved One Speaks

Ask Carol Hrdlicka. Her husband was shot down in Laos and his picture in captivity appeared in **Pravda**; he was accordingly carried as a POW although he did not return home with so many others in 1973. She told the Select Committee: "I have asked to see the Defense Intelligence



Agency evidence that David had not survived, and they tell me they have no evidence to this day that he is not alive. If there is no evidence that these men are dead, then why can't we make the assumption they are alive?" Said Mrs. Hrdlicka, hands on her heart, "I know in here he's alive. I consider myself a realistic person, and I believe if it was final, I would know it was final."

Senator Kerry, with that exaggerated melancholy that he often affects, claimed that he wasn't trying to stamp out what was in the loyal wife's heart. Yet, he condescendingly proclaimed, "You don't close the ease, but you can't say you know he's alive today."

To paraphrase one Indochinese expatriate: Not even a Vietnamese peasant would believe what John Kerry has attempted to tell the American public. Kerry is not alone in this effort. In the DIA, there is a belief among some that the agency has pulled one over and dodged a bullet. If that assessment seems harsh, consider the past history. Consider the lies that have since been uncovered. Then consider how harsh life must have been — and may still be — for the men who did their duty, who really dodged bullets, but who were written off so long ago and abandoned in the hands of the enemy.

Hanoi and Money

When Senator John Kerry (DMA), chairman of the Senate Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs, was given access to a Vietnamese military museum, it was part of the tactic meant to show what great guys they have in Hanoi and how deserving they are of having the U.S. ease the embargo and open full relations. Never mind that the "openness" of Hanoi only proved that they have been lying for two decades about what the Reds knew. But now Mobil wants oil rights and Boeing wants to sell jets to the Vietnamese. Kerry, along with fellow Select Committee members Hank Brown (R-CO) and Tom Daschle (D-SD), indicated that a reward is needed to show Hanoi how much we appreciate their "help."

Itching to Do Business

Then there is Chrysler, whose representatives have been in Hanoi dining on shrimp and champagne in an attempt to get an inside track for the automobile industry. Mitsubishi, however, is said still to have the edge. The Hanoi Chamber of Commerce reported that 113 U.S. firms traveled there during 1992, up from 20 the year before; Du Pont, Kodak, and Kellogg are among these.

A **New York Times** account on February 8th listed other large U.S. companies hoping to get business in Hanoi, including oil companies such as Chevron, Amoco, and Exxon; Northwest and United Airlines; Chase Manhattan and Bank of America; Hewlett-Packard, Compaq Computer, and Honeywell; Bechtel, General Motors, and Caterpillar; and Pepsico and Coca-Cola. Such are the folks Lenin had in mind when he mentioned those who would sell a hangman their own noose: What's a few missing, imprisoned, or killed Americans when there are bucks to be made?

For what it's worth, France's socialist President Francois Mitterrand just urged President Clinton to get rid of the embargo against Vietnam. Mitterrand also said that France's war against the



Vietnamese communists was “a mistake.” Mr. Clinton’s responses thus far trend in the same direction as did George Bush’s — in favor of trade.

Then there are those 5,000 or so photographs that Vietnam made available to the U.S. with such a fanfare. It turns out that the U.S. had seen most of them before. According to a story in the **Washington Post** for February 14, 1993, the shots of plane crashes, casualties, and bomb sites, as well as (previously returned) POWs, were sold by Hanoi to the U.S. for costs of between \$5 and \$25 apiece. However, the prints until recently were apparently available at the Vietnam News Agency archives in Hanoi for 30 cents to \$1 each. A “writer” with Defense Department connections named Theodore Schweitzer III was the go-between for the photographs. “According to U.S. and Vietnamese officials,” the **Post** reported, “the United States channeled the payments through Schweitzer, who was in Hanoi as a private citizen to research a book on the Vietnam War, to avoid the appearance of contravening Washington’s policy of not paying for information on Americans missing in action (MIA) in that conflict.”

Payment for Cooperation

We seem to be paying Hanoi off even without getting a full accounting. The U.S. has been doing a lot of excavation work in Vietnam supposedly looking for our men. Apparently, we then leave the construction equipment behind. Michael Bengé, a former POW in Vietnam, has reported that the Bush Administration paid Hanoi \$100,000 for the above-mentioned photographs, according to his Defense sources. Bengé, in a report in the **Washington Inquirer**, pegs U.S. payments to Hanoi at about \$15 million annually for its alleged cooperation.

Bengé continues: “And the U.S. pays the Viet communists \$8 million a year for rent of helicopters used in the search for MIAs. Furthermore, according to Vietnam’s Foreign Minister Nguyen Man Cam, the U.S. gives Vietnam ‘tens of millions of dollars through United Nations programs.’ Much of this money goes into the personal coffers of the communist leadership, rather than being used for humanitarian needs of the exceedingly poor people. Additionally, the U.S. provides about \$10 million a year in direct humanitarian aid to the Vietnamese through non-governmental organizations. It goes for programs such as prosthetics for the handicapped. However, former South Vietnamese soldiers and government workers are barred by the communists from participating in these programs.”