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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 31, 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: GENERAL RICHARD L. LAWSON 

Counsellor Marsh has suggested that the attached three letters from the National League of Families be forwarded to you for information regarding their views of the relationship between the amnesty issue and that of the MIA's.

We are working all of the issues in the three letters and will have our recommendations to you in the near future.

*Keep me fully informed
Should I meet with them?
RL7*

NATIONAL LEAGUE OF FAMILIES
OF AMERICAN PRISONERS AND MISSING IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

1608 K STREET, N.W., WASHINGTON, D. C. 20005 (202) 628-6811

August 9, 1974

The Honorable Gerald R. Ford
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D. C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

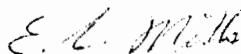
Heartiest congratulations from the National League of Families as you ascend to the Presidency. We are particularly pleased that the officers of our League had the opportunity to meet with you last Friday, August 2nd.

Mr. Nixon was successful in bringing some 566 military POW's and approximately 35 civilians home from the Southeast Asia conflict area. We pray you will be successful in obtaining an honorable and acceptable accounting of the remaining 1,300 missing Americans very quickly. We pledge to assist you in any way possible to accomplish our mutual goal.

Mr. President, our Board instructed me at our Fifth Annual Meeting in Omaha in June of this year to try to arrange a meeting of the Board with President Nixon. I have been working with Gen. Richard Lawson, Military Aide to the President, to arrange a meeting during the weekend of September 6, 7, and 8, at which time we will have our monthly Board meeting in Washington, D. C. Of course, those plans have changed, but our Board fervently desires a meeting with our Commander-in-Chief. May I have the name of your assistant who can help us with arranging this appointment and who will serve in a liaison capacity with the National League of Families.

As a personal note, my wife and I prayed last evening that you will have a successful term as President and that our nation and the world will reap the benefits of your leadership.

Sincerely,



E. C. Mills
Executive Director

ECM:dib



*Nelson
at the time*

NATIONAL LEAGUE OF FAMILIES
OF AMERICAN PRISONERS AND MISSING IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

1608 K STREET, N.W., WASHINGTON, D. C. 20006 (202) 628-6811

August 13, 1974

you

The President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D. C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I was very pleased with your talk before the joint session of Congress last night. I am sure that the content of your speech and the refreshing sincerity in which it was given, gave reassurance to the people of the United States and to the world, that you plan to start immediately to correct some of the ills that plague us.

The remarks pledging, "In Indochina, we are determined to see the observance of the Paris Agreement on Vietnam and the cease-fire negotiated settlement in Laos," etc., were reassuring to the families in the National League.

We have great confidence in General Ulatoski and the J. C. R. C. Team, but they can't do this job unless the areas which are under Communist control or militarily contested areas are opened up for their inspection.

Mr. President, I made an appeal on behalf of the National League of Families, to President Nixon, to send Dr. Kissinger to Southeast Asia to engage in a shuttle diplomacy as was done in the Mid East. A man with Dr. Kissinger's talent, energy, and persuasiveness could get those boundaries open. I make the same appeal to you. We have lived with our frustration far too long. The chances of those who may be POW coming out alive diminishes with each passing day.

Sincerely,

E. C. Mills
Executive Director

ECM:dib



NATIONAL LEAGUE OF FAMILIES
OF AMERICAN PRISONERS AND MISSING IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

1608 K STREET, N.W., WASHINGTON, D. C. 20006 (202) 628-6811

August 20, 1974

The President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D. C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I have been following with great interest the transition from the Nixon administration to your administration. In a previous letter of August 8th, I expressed, on behalf of our League of Families, our appreciation for the opportunity to meet with you the week before you ascended to the presidency. Also, I mentioned how pleased we were with your show of "genuine concern and desire to help us achieve the accounting we so fervently want."

Mr. President, on behalf of the Board of the National League of Families, I must say that we are, to put it mildly, disappointed and disturbed that the POW/MIA issue isn't occupying a higher place on your priority lists of great concerns of our people and our nation. Perhaps we have too readily accepted such statements as, "The POW/MIA issue is a priority of the highest order," by Mr. Nixon and Dr. Kissinger, at face value. We must have a fuller meaning of statements such as the short one you made at the joint session of Congress in reference to "seeing that the Paris Peace Agreements are carried out" or the short reference you made in your speech to the V.F.W. convention, yesterday, "that you will not forget those missing in action."

Two items which have received the most media coverage recently give us cause to wonder about which priorities rank higher than the POW/MIA issue.

- (1) It is inconceivable that our Commander-in-Chief would show greater concern in a speech to Veterans for those who chose to leave the United States or to desert rather than serve our government and the U. S., than he does for over 1,300 U. S. Servicemen who are still unaccounted for in Southeast Asia--placed in these categories while serving our government and the U. S. Please sit in our chair and view it from our perspective. My telegram to you pleaded for you to make a strong statement relating to the still unsettled POW/MIA issue. I mentioned the fact that some of the families have suffered through eight or nine years of great frustration and such a statement from you would

be so meaningful. What came out was something less than strong. We are not satisfied that you and others will always remember the missing in action. We are more concerned that you will take decisive action to account for the missing. Mainly, what came out through the media were your statements on "conditional amnesty" for those, who for reasons of their own, decided to leave our country rather than serve, or chose to desert from the armed services. There was not one bit of TV or newspaper coverage regarding your "always remember those missing in action." You mentioned also that they, the dodgers and deserters, would have to earn re-entry into the U. S. Our men have earned their re-entry whether they be alive and walking or in a casket.

It is not too reassuring to us that you made your decision after hearing from "five or six people in the Cabinet, in my staff, and others that we have to do something about this," and further mentioning it to three of your children. We of the National League of Families would like to have the collective ear of your counselors. We would love to have five or six cabinet officers, your staff, or your children say, "We have to do something about those 1,300 unaccounted-for U.S. Servicemen in Southeast Asia"--especially if it could have the impact that would inspire you to give a good bit of verbage to our issue in a speech before such a distinguished group as the V.F.W.

- (2) The other item has to do with your meetings with Senators Jackson, Javits, and Ribicoff, and Dr. Kissinger, and others discussing the trade bill as it relates to "non-discriminatory" treatment for Russia in trade and benefits with the U. S. It seems from all indications that provisions were agreed upon that would make the bill more palatable to the Senators and the concern they have for "freedom of emigration" for Soviet citizens, and it is apparently acceptable to Ambassador Dobrynin. of the Soviet Union.


Our group is certainly not satisfied with any trade bill that would give "most-favored treatment" to Russia until we have an honorable and acceptable accounting for our 1,300 U. S. citizens (Servicemen) who are classified as POW or MIA in Southeast Asia. These men were sent there through provisions in the Tonkin Gulf Resolution. It was some Russian-built munitions that put them in the MIA/POW status. It is inconceivable to us that seventy-seven U. S. senators would co-sponsor the Jackson (Mills-Vanik) Amendment, while only eleven would co-sponsor the Gurney Amendment.

Do these senators actually have a greater concern for Soviet citizens than they do for U. S. Servicemen? It comes through loudly and clearly to those of us who have lived with the frustration for eight or nine years our loved ones have been POW/MIA that they do.

Senator Lawton Chiles' Amendment #1465 to the Trade Reform Act of 1973 embodies (1) the humanitarian concern for Soviet citizens that is in the Jackson Amendment, and (2) the humanitarian concern for the accounting of the POW/MIA of the Gurney Amendment.

We would be happy to see a picture of you, Dr. Kissinger, and a group of senators at breakfast and coming out with a positive statement on your plans to get the boundaries of Communist-controlled areas opened to inspection of our J.C.R.C. Team, the International Red Cross, or third country neutrals. Mr. President, we appreciate statements of concern, but we want and expect plans of action. We don't want a sixth annual meeting. We want the earliest possible honorable and acceptable accounting. To even discuss amnesty and favored-nation status for Russia before our men are accounted for is deplorable to us. Please come out immediately with a strong statement condemning the DRV and PRG and let us know something of your plan to get the accounting.

Respectfully,



E. C. Mills
Executive Director

ECM:dib


cc: Commander Ray R. Soden, VFW
Commander R. E. L. Eaton, American Legion
Commander Walter T. Greaney, DAV

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

September 4, 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR: GENERAL LAWSON

FROM: ALEXANDER M. HAIG, JR. 

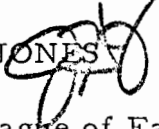
Insure that in the future memos such as the attached go to the President through the appropriate channels.

rs
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n

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

September 5, 1974

ADMINISTRATIVELY CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM FOR: MGEN RICHARD L. LAWSON
FROM: JERRY H. JONES 
SUBJECT: National League of Families

Your memorandum to the President of August 31 on the above subject has been reviewed and the following notation was made:

-- Keep me fully informed.
Should I meet with them?

cc: Al Haig