

The original documents are located in Box 123, folder “MIA (persons missing in action in Southeast Asia)” of the Ron Nessen Papers at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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M. I. A. 's

Q. On May 7 the President issued a proclamation terminating the Vietnam "era" and ending special benefits for those in military service. How does this affect the status of men still listed as MIA in Indochina?

A. As the President said in his statement accompanying this proclamation, this determination in no way affects the eligibility for benefits of those who served during the Vietnam war. It has no effect on the status of any unaccounted for men nor their eligibility for military benefits. Nor does it in any way affect our continuing efforts to account for our missing men throughout Indochina. This remains a personal concern of the President, and the Administration is making continuing efforts to resolve this grave humanitarian problem. Our commitment on this problem remains as strong as ever.

FYI ONLY: We're seeking information on 2,300 men (from earlier Indochina conflict).

TOTAL NO. MILITARY MEN MISSING	870
TOTAL U. S. CIVILIANS MISSING	30
LEGALLY DEAD, BUT UNACCOUNTED	
FOR:	1,400

July 7, 1975

NORTH VIETNAMESE CONDITIONS FOR RETURN OF MIA's

FOR YOUR BACKGROUND USE ONLY:

North Vietnamese Response to Congressional Letter: Radio Hanoi yesterday carried a reply to a May 22 letter to Premier Pham Van Dong from "27 members of the U.S. House of Representatives who had previously worked to end... military involvement in South Vietnam...on the question of (those Americans) missing in action." The premier's reply thanked the congressmen for their opposition to the U.S. government's Vietnam policy and again linked the return of American war dead with aid to both "zones" of Vietnam. The key paragraph stated:

"Now that the war has ended and peace has been reestablished...all the problems concerning Vietnam and the United States, such as the U.S. contribution to the healing of the wounds of war in both zones of Vietnam, the search for Americans missing in action, the disinternment and repatriation of the bones of dead Americans, remain and must be promptly settled. The DRV government is ready to discuss with the U.S. government the settlement of these problems. At the same time, the DRV government reaffirms that the respect by the U.S. government for the Vietnamese people's basic national rights, the total cessation of interference in the internal affairs of South Vietnam, and the accomplishment of its obligation to the healing of the wounds of war and the postwar reconstruction in both zones of Vietnam will create favorable conditions for the establishment of normal relations between the DRV and the United States...."

Yesterday the State Department was asked about the North Vietnamese conditions, and said "We have commented on this subject a number of times. We just cannot add anything to it."

12.16.76

GUIDANCE: MIA REPORT

We have no comment on Rep. Montgomery's report. It is a Congressional report. There is no change in our position.

December 16, 1976

Guidance: Yamani - OPEC

We are pleased that Saudi Arabia has a moderate and appropriate position on oil prices in light of world conditions.

(We should not get into the question of Yamani's leaving the meeting or do anything to make him look like our stooge.)

Reaction to Montgomery Committee MIA Report

Q: What is the President's reaction to the report on MIAs issued by Representative Sonny Montgomery's Select Committee?

A: Members of the White House Staff, as well as appropriate elements in the Department of State and Defense, are now studying the report and its recommendations. We wish to reserve detailed comment on them until after we have conducted a careful review.

The President is deeply grateful to Representative Montgomery and to the other members of Congress who served on the Select Committee for the manner in which they investigated this most important matter. The Committee was also instrumental in obtaining the return of the remains of five servicemen, and arranging for the release of a number of American citizens who were detained in Vietnam after the war.

The American people should be grateful to the members of the Committee and to Representative Montgomery for their devotion and hard work.

MIA FAMILIES TO WASHINGTON

Q: Does the President feel that it is an appropriate use of DOD funds to fly MIA families to Washington?

A: Yes, we want to do what we can to assist the families of those missing in action in Indochina .

Q: Will the President meet with the MIA families?

A: I don't know.