tee on February 8, for example, Secretary of State Rogers said that "we do not regard the Lao list as complete." \textsuperscript{80}

Dr. Kissinger's visit to Hanoi

Prior to the signing of the peace agreement, Dr. Kissinger and Le Duc Tho had discussed the possibility of a visit by Kissinger to Hanoi for the purpose of dramatizing the peace agreement and initiating a process of postwar planning that would include substantial amounts of U.S. aid.

Discrepancy cases

In preparation for Dr. Kissinger's trip to Hanoi, the DIA prepared a list of 80 individuals, many of whom the agency listed as POW but who were not on the January 27 DRV or Viet Cong lists. In some cases, these were individuals who had been photographed or interviewed while in North Vietnamese custody. Others involved airmen whom the U.S. had reason to believe survived their incident and may have been taken into captivity. According to Dr. Roger Shields, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, there were also some cases about whom the U.S. knew very little, but whose names were added in the hope that the DRV would provide information and also to test the good faith of the North Vietnamese. Folders on approximately 20 of the strongest cases accompanied Dr. Kissinger to Hanoi.

The DIA talking points prepared for Dr. Kissinger stressed the fact that the prisoners on the DRV/Laos list had been captured not by the Pathet Lao, but by the North Vietnamese. The DIA also stated that approximately 215 men from the 350 U.S. personnel missing in Laos "were lost under circumstances that the enemy probably has information regarding their fate." \textsuperscript{81}

Accompanied by Deputy Assistant Secretary of State William Sullivan, Dr. Kissinger arrived in Hanoi on February 10 for three days of meetings with DRV leaders, including Pham Van Dong and Le Duc Tho. During a 3 and \(\frac{1}{2}\) hour meeting on the first day, Dr. Kissinger raised the issue of the U.S. POWs and a number of file folders were given to the North Vietnamese for the purpose of investigation. As Ambassador Sullivan recalled for the Committee:

I do recall that one of the cases involved, I believe a Navy Lieutenant Commander, Navy pilot, who had been shot down and had been photographed and used in a North Vietnamese propaganda photo.

And Dr. Kissinger pulled that out and we discussed this and used it as a sort of serious discrepancy which existed, and therefore merited more study. And we went through, I would say, a half dozen of them, but I don't think all of them . . . \textsuperscript{82}

Dr. Kissinger recalls in his memoirs:

We knew of at least 80 instances in which an American serviceman had been captured alive and subsequently dis-

\textsuperscript{80} House Foreign Affairs Committee hearing, February 8, 1973, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{81} DIA Talking Points for Dr. Kissinger, Feb. 6, 1973.
\textsuperscript{82} Select Committee hearing, September 21, 1992.
appeared. The evidence consisted either of voice communications from the ground in advance of capture or photographs and names published by the Communists. Yet none of these men was on the list of POWs handed over after the Agreement. Why? Were they dead? How did they die? Were they missing? How was that possible after capture? I called special attention to the 19 cases where pictures of the captured had been published in the Communist press. Pham Van Dong replied noncommitally that the lists handed over to us were complete . . .

We have never received an explanation of what could possibly have happened to prisoners whose pictures had appeared in communist newspapers, much less the airmen we knew from voice communications had safely reached the ground.**

Meanwhile, the two sides went ahead with discussions about re-construction aid and announced the creation of a Joint Economic Commission which would receive and administer U.S. financial help. Dr. Kissinger told the Select Committee that it was his hope that:

After all this anguish of war . . . there might be a period in which they would turn to the reconstruction of their country and improving relations with the outside world, and if you look at the concluding statements that Le Duc Tho and I made off the top of our heads after a 20-hour negotiating session (the previous October), you will see that that was a dominant theme.

And in fact when I went to Hanoi in February, that was one of my hopes. I remember one of the newsmen accompanying me on the plane said, what you’re really hoping for is that Pham Van Dong, who was then Prime Minister in Hanoi, would turn out to a Chou En-Lai, and I said that’s right, that’s what I would like to see happen.*

**Enforcing the Indochina understanding**

Although the release of American prisoners on the January 27 DRV and PRG lists was proceeding satisfactorily, the U.S. expectation that the DRV would guarantee the release of prisoners in Laos, based on the assurances provided to Dr. Kissinger by Le Duc Tho, was badly shaken. Despite U.S. protests, the DRV continued to promise only the release of a small number of prisoners who had not been held in Laos in the first place. No prisoners actually captured by the Pathet Lao were scheduled for release. The U.S. hoped, however, that the negotiation of a cease-fire between the contending factions in Laos might result in the release of U.S. prisoners even though the U.S. had reached no agreement on this subject with the Pathet Lao.

U.S. hopes were strengthened on February 17, 1973, when Pathet Lao spokesman Soth Petrasy told UPI that his group had “a detailed accounting of prisoners and where they are being held.”

---

**Kissinger memoirs, volume II, the White House Years, p. 34.**
**Select Committee hearing, September 22, 1992.**