

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

February 3, 1999

Presidential Determination No. 99-12

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF STATE

SUBJECT: Vietnamese Cooperation in Accounting for United States Prisoners of War and Missing in Action (POW/MIA)

As provided under section 609 of the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1999, as contained in the Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act, 1999, Public Law 105-277, I hereby determine, based on all information available to the United States Government, that the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam is fully cooperating in good faith with the United States in the following four areas related to achieving the fullest possible accounting for Americans unaccounted for as a result of the Vietnam War:

1. resolving discrepancy cases, live sightings, and field activities;
2. recovering and repatriating American remains;
3. accelerating efforts to provide documents that will help lead to the fullest possible accounting of POW/MIAs; and,
4. providing further assistance in implementing trilateral investigations with Laos.

I further determine that the appropriate laboratories associated with POW/ MIA accounting are thoroughly analyzing remains, material, and other information and fulfilling their responsibilities as set forth in subsection (B) of section 609, and information pertaining to this accounting is being made available to immediate family members in compliance with 50 U.S.C. 435 note.

I have been advised by the Department of Justice that section 609 is unconstitutional because it purports to use a condition on appropriations as a means to direct my execution of responsibilities that the Constitution commits exclusively to the President. I am providing this determination as a matter of comity with the Congress, while reserving the position that the condition enacted in section 609 is unconstitutional.

In making this determination, I have taken into account all information available to the United States Government as reported to me, including the full range of ongoing accounting activities in Vietnam, joint and unilateral Vietnamese efforts, and the concrete results we have attained as a result of these efforts.

Finally, in making this determination, I wish to reaffirm my continuing personal commitment to the entire POW/MIA community, especially to the immediate families, relatives, friends, and supporters of these brave individuals, and to reconfirm that the central, guiding principle of my Vietnam policy is to achieve the fullest possible accounting of our prisoners of war and missing in action.

You are authorized and directed to report this determination to the appropriate committees of the Congress and to publish it in the Federal Register.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

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