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News Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Top U.S. POW/MIA Official Visits Vietnam

The senior U.S. government official responsible for policy oversight of accounting for POWs and MIAs arrived in Vietnam Tuesday for a seven-day visit. Jerry D. Jennings, deputy assistant secretary of Defense for POW/Missing Personnel Affairs, will end his visit to Vietnam next week in Ho Chi Minh City, after spending several days in Hanoi meeting with the national leadership of Vietnam and senior wartime leaders.

Throughout his meetings with the senior leadership of Vietnam, Jennings stressed President George W. Bush's commitment that resolution of the POW/MIA issue remains one of the most important priorities in our relations with Vietnam.

"One of my primary responsibilities," he said, "is to ensure that everyone understands the strong level of commitment our entire government has to the effort of bringing our missing personnel home. During my visit, I have sought assurances from the government of Vietnam for greater unilateral efforts on their part to help us resolve the fates of the nearly 1,900 Americans still missing from the Vietnam War. I also advocated greater access to archival materials, and increased participation in a program to interview senior wartime leaders who may have information about our missing. Without fail, the government officials with whom I met assured me of their determination to assist us in this noble humanitarian effort."

Since arriving in Hanoi, Jennings has met with Deputy Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung; Vice Minister of National Defense Lt. Gen. Nguyen Huy Hieu; Vice Minister of Public Security Lt. Gen. Nguyen Khanh Toan; and the Chairman of the National Assembly's National Defense and Security Commission, Lt. Gen. Nguyen Phuc Thanh. He also held discussions with the leadership and members of the Veterans Association of Vietnam in Hanoi and will also meet with veterans in Ho Chi Minh City.

More than 600 U.S. specialists are at work every day around the world attempting to locate and identify the more than 88,000 Americans still missing from World War II, the Korean War, the Cold War, the Vietnam War and the 1991 Gulf War. Since the end of the war in Vietnam, U.S. teams have located and identified the remains of nearly 700 Americans who were once missing as a result of the Vietnam War.

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