

DIA EVALUATION OF PW/MIA INFORMATION
PROVIDED BY VIETNAMESE REFUGEE
(11369)

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SUMMARY: A Vietnamese refugee reported observing an American Caucasian and his Amerasian son selling firewood in the marketplace of Tung Nghia village, Lam Dong Province, Vietnam during the August-September timeframe of 1986. A second sighting of the father selling firewood occurred in November 1987.

DETAILS: A Vietnamese refugee reported that while walking through the marketplace in Tung Nghia village, Duc Trong District in Lam Dong Province in August or September of 1986, he observed a Caucasian and his Amerasian son selling firewood at a stall. The source joined a crowd of people gathered around the stall and observed the two for a period of about 30 minutes. During this time the Caucasian, who spoke fluent Vietnamese, endeavored ~~at~~ to sell ~~his~~ his firewood to potential customers. The source was told by other villagers the Caucasian was a former American serviceman who had taken a North Vietnamese wife, that the couple had at least one child, and that they resided in the nearby Hanoi New Economic Zone (NEZ). He was also told that the Caucasian visited the Tung Nghia marketplace at irregular intervals to sell firewood. The source reported that he observed this same individual a second time approximately one year later. This sighting occurred along National Highway 19 where the Caucasian was attempting to sell his firewood while awaiting transportation to the Tung Nghia market.

11369

37

ANALYSIS: Duc Trong District in general, and Tung Nghia village and the Hanoi NEZ in particular, were the target area of an LSI investigation conducted in May 1992. The joint investigative team visited Tung Nghia village, to include the location in the marketplace where firewood was sold, as well as the villages that comprised the Hanoi NEZ and the surrounding area. Local residents and wood sellers in Tung Nghia were questioned about the alleged presence of an American and his Amerasian son selling firewood at the marketplace. They confirmed that an Amerasian had indeed sold firewood at the market. His father, who was Vietnamese, reportedly did not accompany him ~~too~~ often. The team was told that this Amerasian, who was in his mid-twenties, immigrated to the United States in late 1989 or early 1990. Other relatives provided pictures of him for the LSI investigator. The residents and vendors were unanimous in their assertions that this individual was the only person who could possibly have been mistakenly identified as an American selling firewood at the market place. Residents throughout the district, to include villages that formerly comprised the Hanoi NEZ, continually reported never having seen or hearing of any Americans residing in the area after the war. Caucasians associated with the World Church Crusade, some tourists, and Soviet Bloc personnel were mentioned as being observed by local residents. In addition to the evidence gathered during the investigation that refutes the source's claimed sighting of an American serviceman in Duc Trong District, a Chinese-Vietnamese refugee who formerly resided in Tung Nghia for 25 years stated that she never observed or heard of Americans living in the village or

11369

38

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the Hanoi NEZ after the war. This source lived in Tung Nghia through 1987 and reported that she visited the market several times a week and frequently traveled along the highways near the village.

EVALUATION: Although a joint investigation into this alleged sighting of an American serviceman and his Vietnamese family residing in Duc Trong District confirmed the ~~allegation of the~~ presence of an Amerasian selling firewood at the local market, no evidence was uncovered that would substantiate the claimed presence of an American serviceman. The latter is also reinforced by other source reporting. This report is evaluated as the sighting of an Amerasian.

DATE OF EVALUATION: August 1992

PW/MIA CATEGORY: Non-U.S., Amerasian

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