

The original documents are located in Box 22, folder “MIA/POW - Presidential Task Force (1)” of the John Marsh Files at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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8/17/76

We must achieve the return of all Americans who may be held in Southeast Asia and a full accounting of those listed as Missing in Action. We strongly urge continued consultation between the President and the National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia. This country owes at least this much to all of these courageous people who have anguished so long over this matter. To this end and to underscore our top priority commitment to the families of these POW's and MIA's we recommend among other actions the establishment of a Presidential task force headed by a special Presidential representative.


(per Jim Reichley -- re platform) - given to David in Milt's office per request. /cb



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Jack -
Approve 
Option # 1

(It's either now
or never!)

V (H) 
Russ
N R R R

OCT 13 1976

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

10/12/76

Jack -

Here is the GPTON PAPER
ON THE MIA TASK FORCE.

Good Luck.

Walt

#

Op

|

gm

mias

August 27, 1976

MEMORANDUM TO: MILT MITLER

FROM: RUSS ROURKE

Milt, I agree with your suggestion that Dermot Foley's letter can be very helpful as we set about to organize the functions and direction of the Task Force. It certainly is interesting to note that Foley's letter was written in January of 1975.

RAR:cb



AUG 24 1976

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 23, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: RUSS ROURKE

FROM: MILT MITLER *Milt*

Russ, attached is a copy of a Presidential Memo sent through Jack by Ted Marrs back in January. Because of the Republican Convention Platform request concerning an MIA White House Task Force, I thought I would surface this with you.

Attachment (Presidential Memo)

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

January 30, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT
THRU: COUNSELOR MARSH
FROM: DR. TED MARRS *DM*

There has been an extensive adverse reaction to the test of a Departmental Task Force on MIA. There is a solid distrust of the military and of State officials with whom the families have been dealing.

The attached letter from Dermot Foley describes what I believe would be a workable and acceptable Task Force.

I recommend we change our tack while we can and use Foley's words in describing our program -- and then follow it.

Attachment

CC: Mr. Rumsfeld
 → Mr. Hartmann
 General Scowcroft
 General Lawson

KAPLAN, WILSHEIMER & FOLEY
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

LEE KAPLAN
JAMES D. WILSHEIMER II
DENNIS S. FOLEY
HAROLD SIMON
ROBERT M. KAPLAN

122 EAST 42ND STREET
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017
MURRAY HILL 7-1530

January 24, 1975

Dr. Theodore Marrs
Room 103
Executive Office Building
Washington, D. C.

Re: MIA Task Force

Dear Dr. Marrs:

From a review of my notes, I find that it was suggested when we met in November, that I send you my thoughts on the need for and the function of a Task Force to address problems respecting the M.I.A. situation.

As we left your office and returned to New York, my brother and I engaged in some preliminary analysis and speculation as to what, if anything, is the likely attitude of the Administration towards a Task Force and, if such a body is convened, how it should proceed.

Our estimate was that an indisposition to proceed with the Task Force probably prevails in the Administration and that if we were in error, it should become apparent in a short time as actions and decisions of the President are announced. Our pessimism increased very substantially the next day when the family members who had spoken to Gen. Scowcroft while we were seeing you, reported that he professed not to know of the Task Force proposal.

My view at the moment is that, until and unless the President takes steps indicating a commitment to convene a Task Force, the families are entitled to presume that he

January 24, 1975

does not intend to do so. Indeed, I believe that, at this point, if he does not reveal, in some substantial and tangible way, that he intends to move toward meaningful accomplishments in the M.I.A. area, we must presume that he plans not to accomplish much but to let the situation drift along safely hidden from the light of day. I can tell you most sincerely that I would regard that as a genuine pity. I believe that I share with most family members a keen desire to cooperate with rather than oppose or criticize the President.

Under these circumstances, an expression of my views respecting the Task Force may be of some value. For whatever it is worth, the following is offered.

1. I believe that the Task Force would be unduly restricted by an attempt to tightly circumscribe its functions and goals before it is created. Rather, the first assignment of the Task Force should be to examine and analyze the present situation, factually, and to find out how and why we arrived at this position. *Concur*

2. Only then can the Task Force look for remedies or solutions. In doing so, a spectrum of viewpoints probably must be considered. These may include the military and diplomatic needs of our Government, the civil and due process rights of the missing men themselves as well as those of their next-of-kin, the impact of the present problems as precedent in future conflicts, the development of new approaches and the improvement of existing approaches to augment present accounting efforts and the development of new criteria and procedures for determining whether an M.I.A. has died or is presumed to have died. *Concur*

3. The Task Force should be composed of a limited number of objective, independent citizens of impeccable reputation. Representation from the Senate and House would be appropriate as well as the principal professions, academic institutions, religious organizations, industry and labor. The goal should be to obtain the services of a group of



*Would concur
except for Aug. 1975.*

January 24, 1975

Individuals distinguished by their objectivity, candor, integrity, dedication and thoughtfulness who would fairly reflect a spectrum of responsible views.

4. In addition to the Task Force proper, there should be provision for meaningful in-but of opinions and views by those who may not be objective but who have an interest in what is occurring. These would surely include the families of the M.I.A.'s and also, possibly, the Departments of State and Defense.

5. The Task Force should be given a time schedule for the completion of its initial work and the preparation of its own program. That program should also set time schedules.

6. Candor and openness are essential to success of the Task Force. If there were any indication of a cover-up of information or of an attempt to pave over the problems rather than to meet and deal openly with them, the project would be severely compromised.

7. I am informed there is a fear that materials and information made available to the Task Force would be a target for inquiry under the Freedom of Information Act. I suggest that this is not a legitimate objection to the convening of the Task Force. Any such materials and/or information presumably is now in government possession and, thus, is now eligible for F.I.A. inquiries. Consequently, there is little distinction between exposing such data to a Task Force appointed by the President or to a Federal Judge for in camera inspection as required under the F.I.A. amendments which become operative in February. (Come to think of it, those who would obstruct the Task Force might be much more distressed with a Judge.)

I would be pleased if the foregoing were helpful. I realize that I have only touched on some of the most elementary aspects of the problem and that much more detailed consideration may be needed. However, I expect we may agree

January 24, 1975

that the Administration and the M.I.A. families have reached something of a fish-or-cut-bait position. If the President really means to do something effectual and substantive about the M.I.A.'s, now is the time to do so and the time to let the families know that the wait-and-see policy is over.

I am enclosing with this letter a number of documents which we had discussed and which you indicated an interest in reviewing. If you know of any way in which I can contribute to a serious effort to achieve an M.I.A. accounting, please contact me.

Respectfully yours,



Dermot G. Foley

DGF:sw

Enclosures:

1. Copy of letter dated 9/6/74 from John O. Marsh, Jr. to D. G. Foley;
2. M.I.A. Memorandum of D. G. Foley dated 5/13/74;
3. M.I.A. Memorandum of D. G. Foley to Martin Hoffman dated 5/30/74;
4. Statement of D. G. Foley to House Armed Services Committee dated 10/10/74; and
5. Supplemental Statement of D. G. Foley to House Armed Services Committee dated 12/13/74.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

9/8/76

Russ -

HERE IS THE AGENDA

SHEET FOR THE MIA

MEETING ON THURS.

9/9 - 3:00 - 4:00 PM.

Went

(I double checked and
had 3:30. - It is 3:30!)

MIA's

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

A G E N D A

MEETING

"MISSING IN ACTION"
Roosevelt Room
September 9, 1976

ATTENDEES:

Counsellor John O. Marsh, Jr.
Russell Rourke
Milton E. Mitler
William Gleysteen, NSC
Dr. Roger Shields, DoD
Frank Sieverts, State

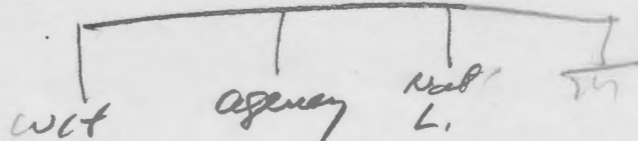
Carol Gates
Earl Hopper

UN effort currently underway

- Discussion of Republican platform item concerning a White House Task Force for Missing In Action which is:

We must achieve the return of all Americans who may be held in Southeast Asia and a full accounting of those listed as Missing In Action. We strongly urge continued consultation between the President and the National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia. This country owes at least this much to all of these courageous people who have anguished so long over this matter. To this end and to underscore our top priority commitment to the families of these POW's and MIA's we recommend among other actions the establishment of a Presidential task force headed by a special Presidential representative

- If we have a Task Force
- Authority
- Purpose
- Make-up
- Term



has thoroughness



DICK HANSON / had suggested Blue Ribbon Committee types -

set up
meeting
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Jack -

Shall we have a
meeting w/ Milt
and other appropriate
types to discuss
execution of MIA
plan? ?

Kurt

AUG 21 1976

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

August 19, 1976



MEMORANDUM FOR:

RUSS ROURKE

FROM:

MILT MITLER *Milt*

Russ, the National League of Families has begun to probe into the plans we may have to implement the plank referring to a White House Task Force on the MIA matter. They would like to know what form it will take, when it will be formed, who will the members be and can they have membership on it, what authority will it have, who will head it, and how will it function.

I'm sure there's no surprise in this request. However, at some point we are going to have to respond to them.

25 Aug - Milt setting up

*Tom
Milt*

Russ

Shields

Hyland / Secord

sudden assault against South Korea. We reaffirm the commitment of the United States to the territorial integrity and the sovereignty of the Republic of Korea. Simultaneously we encourage the Governments of South Korea and North Korea to institute domestic policy initiatives leading to the extension of basic human rights.

When Republicans assumed executive office in 1969, we were confronted with a war in Vietnam involving more than 500,000 United States troops, and to which we had committed billions of dollars and our national honor and prestige. It was in the spirit of bipartisan support for Presidential foreign policy initiatives, inaugurated in the postwar era by Senator Arthur Vandenberg, that most Republicans supported the United States commitment to assist South Vietnam resist Communist-sponsored aggression. The human cost to us was great: more than 55,000 Americans died in that conflict, and more than 300,000 were wounded.

A policy of patient, persistent and principled negotiations extricated the United States from that ill-fated war with the expectation that peace would prevail. The refusal of the Democrat-controlled Congress to give support to Presidential requests for military aid to the beleaguered nations of South Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, coupled with sustained military assaults by the Communists in gross violation of the Paris Peace Accords, brought about the collapse of these nations and the subjugation of their people to totalitarian rule.

We recognize that there is a wide divergence of opinion concerning Vietnam, but we pledge that American troops will never again be committed for the purpose of our own defense, or the defense of those to whom we are committed by treaty or other solemn agreements, without the clear purpose of achieving our stated diplomatic and military objectives.

We must achieve the return of all Americans who may be held in Southeast Asia, and a full accounting for those listed as Missing in Action. We strongly urge continued consultation between the President and the National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia. This country owes at least this much to all of these courageous people who have anguished so long over this matter. To this end, and to underscore our top priority commitment to the families of these POWs and MIAs, we recommend, among other actions, the establishment of a presidential task force headed by a special Presidential representative.

September 7, 1976

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

Speaking on behalf of all Americans, I welcome the fact that the Vietnamese have finally begun to keep their promise to provide information on our men missing in action in Southeast Asia. While the report on these 12 men was grim, it, at least, resolved their status and removed the crushing burden of anxiety and uncertainty from their relatives and loved ones.

But none of us can be satisfied by this limited action by the Vietnamese. What they have done is to release information on only a dozen men; they still have information on hundreds more. For wives, parents and friends of the men still missing, the anxiety and uncertainty continues.

It is callous and cruel to exploit human suffering in the hope of diplomatic advantage. The Vietnamese have an obligation to provide a full accounting of all Americans missing in action. I call upon them to do so without further delay. Normalization of relations cannot take place until Vietnam accounts for all our men missing in action.

#

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON
A G E N D A
MEETING

"MISSING IN ACTION"
Roosevelt Room
September 9, 1976

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Russell Rourke
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Dr. Roger Shields, DoD
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- If we have a Task Force
- Authority
- Purpose
- Make-up
- Term

POW/MIA ISSUE

March

1. When will a specific affirmative plan be announced to get an accounting?
2. Why was the Task Force not named as promised by President Ford on March 8, 1976?
3. When will a negotiator be named?
4. When will President Ford issue an Executive Order to stop all status changes until we can get an accounting?

Mrs. Farrell J. Sullivan
2504 McGregor Drive
Austin, Texas 78745

Home: 512-441-2496
Office: 512-475-5901

Pres. Schud.
SAT. - Sun. 9/18/19
NT - Ohio

SEP 14 1976

2:50

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

September 13, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: JACK MARSH
FROM: DICK CHENEY

2

Jack, attached is a memo given to the President by Bob Dole.

He wants some answers.

Attachment

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

September 29, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR:

PHILIP W. BUCHEN
JAMES M. CANNON
JAMES H. CAVANAUGH
JAMES E. CONNOR
MICHAEL DUVAL
MAX L. FRIEDERSDORF
JERRY H. JONES
BRENT SCOWCROFT

FROM:

JOHN O. MARSH, JR. 

The Republican Platform contains a plank calling for the creation of a Presidential Task Force to look into the problem of our missing in action in Southeast Asia. Attached is the wording for the plank.

I have held one "in-house" meeting to consider the advisability of such a Task Force and to discuss responsibility, authority, membership, chairmanship and term, should we decide to move in that direction.

The National League of Families which is composed of many of the families of those listed as missing in action and as prisoners of war is pressing for the formation of the Task Force and for membership from their group on such a panel. We have also had some congressional interest. In addition, the opposition candidate for President has indicated that he would form a Task Force if elected.

While our meeting was not conclusive, there was a general feeling that we should satisfy the requirements of the plank but that in doing so we should select individuals of stature who could do more than just meet on occasion. We also agreed that any such body would have to spend its initial period pouring over previous information concerning the MIA's which exists at the Defense and State Departments and with the Select Committee of the Congress.

Also, the Chairman of a Task Force for this purpose should be carefully selected and be one who would be considered acceptable to the families. There was mixed feeling about participants by a member of the League of Families on the Force. However, there was agreement that a League representative could be in an ex-officio position.

It was also agreed in principle that the Task Force would be given three phases for its actions. First, to review what has been done up to now; second, to recommend the next steps considered necessary toward securing an accounting; and, third, to satisfy any further Presidential mandate on the matter. The League has been seeking an Executive Order to halt all changes in status from missing in action to killed in action until there is an accounting and that could be another point for Task Force consideration.

My review of the Lawson file which contains information concerning previous discussions about a White House Task Force indicates that there was a recommendation for its formation. The question became moot when the House Select Committee was formed and supported by the National League of Families.

I am about to make a recommendation to the President on this and would first like your comments. Can I have your opinion of this by close of business on Friday, October 8, 1976.

Additionally, we should consider the impact on this subject of the recent selection of James Wilson whose duties also have a MIA orientation. Please see the attached.

Attachments

We must achieve the return of all Americans who may be held in Southeast Asia and a full accounting of those listed as Missing In Action. We strongly urge continued consultation between the President and the National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia. This country owes at least this much to all of these courageous people who have anguished so long over this matter. To this end and to underscore our top priority commitment to the families of these POW's and MIA's we recommend among other actions the establishment of a Presidential task force headed by a special Presidential representative.

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

The President today announced his intention to nominate James M. Wilson, Jr., of Bethesda, Maryland, to be Coordinator for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs. This is a new position created by Public Law 94-329 of June 30, 1976. He will be responsible for matters pertaining to human rights and humanitarian affairs including matters relating to refugees, prisoners of war, and members of the United States Armed Forces missing in action, in the conduct of foreign policy. Mr. Wilson has been Coordinator for Humanitarian Affairs at the Department of State.

Born on July 8, 1918, in China of American parents, Mr. Wilson received his A. B. degree in 1939 from Swarthmore College and his M. A. in 1940 from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. He attended Harvard Law School and received his LL. B. in 1948. He served in the United States Army as a Lieutenant Colonel from 1941 to 1946, and was a Staff Officer in the United States Air Force from 1948 to 1951.

In 1953, Mr. Wilson became a Defense Advisor in Paris and Bonn for USRO and from 1955 to 1958, he was Director of the Office for Military Rights, International Security Affairs in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. From 1958 to 1961, he was the Assistant Coordinator for Mutual Security at the State Department, and during 1961, he was the Assistant Coordinator for Foreign Assistance. From 1961 to 1964, he was Counselor of Economic Affairs, then Deputy Director of USOM in Madrid and later Deputy Director.

Mr. Wilson became the Deputy Chief of Mission in 1964 in Bangkok, with the rank of Minister and was the Deputy Chief of Mission in Manila with the rank of Minister from 1966 to 1970. He was Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs from 1970 to 1972. He was Special Assistant for the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs during 1973, prior to becoming U. S. Deputy Representative for Micronesian status negotiations.

Mr. Wilson is married to the former Joan Rathvon and they have five children.

#

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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#



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

October 20
1:05 p.m.

Jack:

Do you have any problem
with out moving immediately
with the Task Force, etc.
I have Milt panting with
anticipation.

Russ

NOTE: Copies to *Brent Scowcroft*
Milt Mitler
Russ Rourke

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

October 20, 1976

ADMINISTRATIVELY CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM FOR: JOHN O. MARSH, JR.
FROM: JAMES E. CONNOR *JEC*
SUBJECT: Formation of a Presidential Task Force on the Missing in Action

The President reviewed your memorandum of October 12 and approved the following option:

Option 1 - Approval of the immediate establishment of a Presidential Task Force for the Missing in Action in Southeast Asia with general requirements outlined, and the selection of a chairman of stature.

The following notation was also made:

"Announce Senator Dole is in charge and immediately after election he will head the Task Force."

Please follow-up with appropriate action.

cc: Dick Cheney
Robert Linder



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

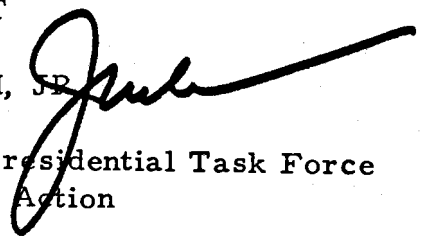
October 12, 1976

ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR:

THE PRESIDENT

FROM:

JOHN O. MARSH, JR. 

SUBJECT:

Formation of a Presidential Task Force
on the Missing in Action

I. BACKGROUND

The Republican Platform contains a plank calling for the establishment of a Presidential Task Force on the missing in action in Southeast Asia.

Accounting by the Vietnamese as well as the other Southeast Asia nations of those men who are still carried as missing in action and prisoners of war continues to be a matter of national concern. The National League of Families and the various veterans groups, who support your position on this, have been quite vocal concerning the need for an accounting.

In 1974/75 there seemed to be a growing agreement at the White House concerning the formation of a task force on MIA's. However, instead, the establishment of the House Select Committee on MIA's, headed by Congressman G. V. "Sonny" Montgomery (D-Miss), was thought to satisfy the need. That Committee had your support and that of the National League of Families. However, the League's support has eroded, particularly since "Sonny" Montgomery, in July, told the families that he expected the Committee's report to reflect a belief that there are no living American servicemen in Southeast Asia. The League also believes that the Committee accomplished nothing more than a cursory look into the problem.

There are currently approximately 800 men still listed as MIA's and POW's. Another 500 have been declared either killed in action or presumed to be dead. This has caused some concern for many of the families who believe that once the status of the individual has

been changed from MIA to killed in action or presumptive finding of death the need for an accounting will have been eliminated. Both the State and Defense Departments have assured the families that this isn't so and that regardless of the status of an individual, unless the remains have been returned, we will continue to seek an accounting.

The families have also pressed for an Executive Order which would stop all changes in status. However, they have been advised that the current moratorium at the Department of Defense, which requires that before a status review can be held on an MIA there must be a request from the immediate next of kin or unrefutable evidence must have surfaced, is satisfying that purpose. The families do not accept this rationale.

A Presidential Task Force, headed by someone of stature such as the Vice President and containing among its members respected individuals, could help assure those concerned during this period that the Administration is doing more than just the normal activity through State Department procedure.

Since the Republican Platform did call for the formation of a task force, and since such formation can only have positive results in terms of showing Administration interest in this sensitive matter, it would seem appropriate to now move ahead and announce the formation of such a body.

A preliminary "in house" meeting was held on September 9, 1976. The results of that meeting and a polling of our senior staff indicates that there is general agreement on the formation of the task force. General Scowcroft, however, believes that we should hold off at least until after the House Select Committee makes its report, which should be at the end of the year.

Should a task force be formed, it should be given specific responsibilities with a mandate to review what has been done up to now at State, Defense, and within the Select Committee. It should be required to determine what steps can and should be taken toward securing the desired accounting; a reporting date; and to satisfy any further mandate of the President on this matter.

II. OPTIONS

1. _____ Approval of the immediate establishment of a Presidential Task Force for the Missing in Action in Southeast Asia with general requirements outlined, and the selection of a chairman of stature.
2. _____ Approval of the need for a Presidential Task Force for the Missing in Action in Southeast Asia, but a delay on implementation until the House Select Committee report is received and evaluated.
3. _____ Disapproval of the need of a Presidential Task Force on the Missing in Action in Southeast Asia.

III. RECOMMENDATION

Decision at the earliest possible time. My preference is for Option 1.

Approve _____ Disapprove _____

NOTE: Copies to Milt Mitler
Russ Rourke

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

October 20, 1976

ADMINISTRATIVELY CONFIDENTIAL

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FROM: JAMES E. CONNOR *JEC*
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cc: Dick Cheney
Robert Linder

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

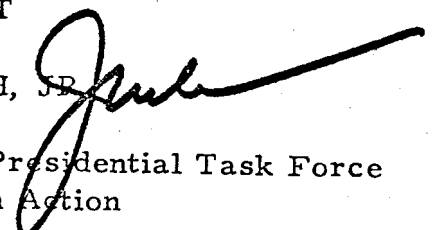
October 12, 1976

ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR:

THE PRESIDENT

FROM:

JOHN O. MARSH, JR. 

SUBJECT:

Formation of a Presidential Task Force
on the Missing in Action

I. BACKGROUND

The Republican Platform contains a plank calling for the establishment of a Presidential Task Force on the missing in action in Southeast Asia.

Accounting by the Vietnamese as well as the other Southeast Asia nations of those men who are still carried as missing in action and prisoners of war continues to be a matter of national concern. The National League of Families and the various veterans groups, who support your position on this, have been quite vocal concerning the need for an accounting.

In 1974/75 there seemed to be a growing agreement at the White House concerning the formation of a task force on MIA's. However, instead, the establishment of the House Select Committee on MIA's, headed by Congressman G. V. "Sonny" Montgomery (D-Miss), was thought to satisfy the need. That Committee had your support and that of the National League of Families. However, the League's support has eroded, particularly since "Sonny" Montgomery, in July, told the families that he expected the Committee's report to reflect a belief that there are no living American servicemen in Southeast Asia. The League also believes that the Committee accomplished nothing more than a cursory look into the problem.

There are currently approximately 800 men still listed as MIA's and POW's. Another 500 have been declared either killed in action or presumed to be dead. This has caused some concern for many of the families who believe that once the status of the individual has

been changed from MIA to killed in action or presumptive finding of death the need for an accounting will have been eliminated. Both the State and Defense Departments have assured the families that this isn't so and that regardless of the status of an individual, unless the remains have been returned, we will continue to seek an accounting.

The families have also pressed for an Executive Order which would stop all changes in status. However, they have been advised that the current moratorium at the Department of Defense, which requires that before a status review can be held on an MIA there must be a request from the immediate next of kin or unrefutable evidence must have surfaced, is satisfying that purpose. The families do not accept this rationale.

A Presidential Task Force, headed by someone of stature such as the Vice President and containing among its members respected individuals, could help assure those concerned during this period that the Administration is doing more than just the normal activity through State Department procedure.

Since the Republican Platform did call for the formation of a task force, and since such formation can only have positive results in terms of showing Administration interest in this sensitive matter, it would seem appropriate to now move ahead and announce the formation of such a body.

A preliminary "in house" meeting was held on September 9, 1976. The results of that meeting and a polling of our senior staff indicates that there is general agreement on the formation of the task force. General Scowcroft, however, believes that we should hold off at least until after the House Select Committee makes its report, which should be at the end of the year.

Should a task force be formed, it should be given specific responsibilities with a mandate to review what has been done up to now at State, Defense, and within the Select Committee. It should be required to determine what steps can and should be taken toward securing the desired accounting; a reporting date; and to satisfy any further mandate of the President on this matter.

II. OPTIONS

1. _____ Approval of the immediate establishment of a Presidential Task Force for the Missing in Action in Southeast Asia with general requirements outlined, and the selection of a chairman of stature.
2. _____ Approval of the need for a Presidential Task Force for the Missing in Action in Southeast Asia, but a delay on implementation until the House Select Committee report is received and evaluated.
3. _____ Disapproval of the need of a Presidential Task Force on the Missing in Action in Southeast Asia.

III. RECOMMENDATION

Decision at the earliest possible time. My preference is for Option 1.

Approve _____

Disapprove _____

NOTE: Copies to Milt Mitler
Russ Rourke

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

October 20, 1976

ADMINISTRATIVELY CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM FOR: JOHN O. MARSH, JR.
FROM: JAMES E. CONNOR *JEC*
SUBJECT: Formation of a Presidential Task
Force on the Missing in Action

The President reviewed your memorandum of October 12 and approved the following option:

Option 1 - Approval of the immediate establishment of a Presidential Task Force for the Missing in Action in Southeast Asia with general requirements outlined, and the selection of a chairman of stature.

The following notation was also made:

"Announce Senator Dole is in charge and immediately after election he will head the Task Force."

Please follow-up with appropriate action.

cc: Dick Cheney
Robert Linder

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

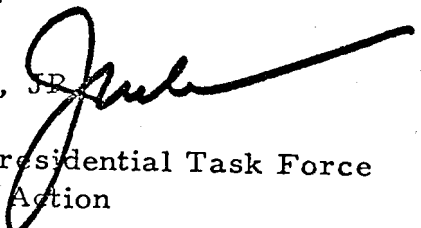
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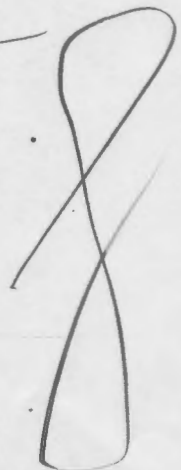
III. RECOMMENDATION

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Approve _____ Disapprove _____

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

October 20, 1976

Russ
FBI
3:30
Jan


ADMINISTRATIVELY CONFIDENTIAL

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Milt Miller
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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

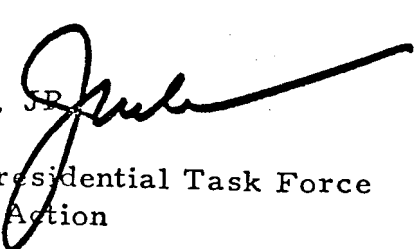
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