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PHOENIX PROGRAM

The following are pertinent excerpts from William Colby's nomination testimony July 2, 1973 on the Phoenix Program:

-- The Phoenix program was developed in order to bring some order into the fight between the subversion of the North Vietnamese and the Vietcong, and the Government. During the mid-1960's in South Vietnam, there was a great deal of anarchy and confusion. Now, a large number of activities went on then that are quite frankly, reprehensible.

-- The Phoenix program... essentially began to operate in mid-1968 with a view to bringing some order into the Government side... of this problem. The Communists, as you know, were conducting a campaign of terrorism against the people of South Vietnam, against local officials, and against National Government officials.... In order to struggle against this apparatus it was necessary to bring together the various intelligence, police forces, and local security forces to begin to identify who the people were in this [Communist] apparatus....

-- In the course of the Phoenix program we looked at the situation and it was apparent that too many people in very minor contact with the rebellion were being captured.... The Phoenix program was designed to make this a regular program so that the attention could be given to the main people that were involved in the command structure on the Communist side....

-- A variety of legal procedures and practical procedures were instituted in the Phoenix program. We tried to improve the accuracy of the information and, secondly, to improve the treatment given to the individuals captured. The thrust of the program was to capture people who were on these lists or to get them to defect or rally to the Government. But in the situation, in the middle of a war like that, a lot of people were killed in the process of the incidents and the attacks. I think some 87 percent, as I remember, of the people killed under the program who were named members of the apparatus were killed by military forces, and only 12 percent were killed by the police and local forces of that nature....

-- I believe that the figures in mid-1971 that were testified to at the time were that some 28,000 had been captured, some 20,000 had been killed, and some 17,000 had actually rallied by that time. Obviously, the program has been going on since then, and those figures are larger today....

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-- Certainly, abuses took place but I think in the record we also included the directive issued by MACV which, frankly, I drafted, which called upon any American who was in the presence of something which did not meet the laws of war, first, not to participate, of course. Second, to indicate his displeasure and his rejection of it to the people involved and, third, to report it to higher authority.

The following excerpts are from Mr. Colby's nomination briefing book:

-- Aside from a GVN national level coordinating committee, the (Phoenix) Phung Hoang program has been incorporated within the national police of Vietnam and is no longer a separate program.

-- The United States advisory effort with the Phung Hoang program was terminated in December 1972 and U.S. assistance to the Phung Hoang program through the Department of Defense ended at the same time.

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