

SECRET  
RAR 3-30-73

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

COMMITTEE CONFIDENTIAL  
DEPOSITION OF RICHARD V. ALLEN

Tuesday, June 23, 1992

U.S. Senate  
Select Committee on POW/MIA  
Affairs  
Washington, D.C.

Deposition of RICHARD V. ALLEN, a witness herein,  
called for examination by counsel for the Senate Select  
Committee on POW/MIA Affairs, was convened at 2:04 p.m., in  
S-407, The Capitol, on Tuesday, June 23, 1992, the witness  
being duly sworn by ANNE P. HOROWITZ, a Notary Public in and  
for the District of Columbia, and the proceedings having been  
taken down by Stenomask by ANNE P. HOROWITZ and transcribed  
under her direction.

Present from the Senate Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs:

- J. WILLIAM CODINHA, ESQ., Chief Counsel
- ROBERT TAYLOR, Investigator

ALDERSON REPORTING COMPANY, INC.  
1111 FOURTEENTH STREET, N.W.  
SUITE 400  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005  
(202) 289-2260  
(800) FOR DEPO

1 1960's, and having watched the war wind slowly down and into  
2 defeat, I was just very concerned about this issue. I  
3 wouldn't say that I went out of my way to inform myself, but I  
4 consumed everything that came my way.

5 And so there was no official involvement. I wasn't  
6 party to any group or any gathering or any movement. But I  
7 was very much concerned about this question, as anyone  
8 properly should be, should have been.

9 Q. You indicated that you had been involved in the  
10 Reagan campaign prior to Mr. Reagan taking office. As a  
11 candidate, Mr. Reagan appeared to have a defined position on  
12 the POW issue and seemed determined to resolve that issue.  
13 Did you ever hear him speaking to that issue?

14 A. I couldn't help the number of times we did talk  
15 about it privately. I've heard him speak publicly and open  
16 about it. Of the thousands and thousands of hours that I  
17 spent with Ronald Reagan over those years, I heard him speak  
18 about it many times.

19 Q. Can you give me -- I realize that meetings and  
20 conversations took place over many occasions and in different  
21 places -- it is hard to define any single one. Can you give  
22 me the gist of what Ronald Reagan was saying to you about  
23 POW/MIA issues while he was a candidate?

24 A. While, it was just essentially, as long as there's  
25 any evidence whatsoever that there are POW's and MIA's there,

1 the United States should spare no effort to get them back and  
2 spare no effort a term of broad application for Ronald Reagan.  
3 But that was basically his attitude. That happened to reflect  
4 mine, which is one of the reasons I supported Ronald Reagan.

5 Q. As a candidate, did you hear Ronald Reagan state  
6 whether he believed -- at any time did you hear him  
7 say -- whether he believed that there actually were POW's?

8 A. I think he did believe it. I cannot say that I  
9 could pinpoint the date and time when I heard him say that,  
10 but the many, many conversations I had with him certainly  
11 indicated to me that he believed that there were some. There  
12 was a high likelihood that there were some. Now we're talking  
13 about in the role of candidate, not yet President.

14 Q. In the role of candidate.

15 A. That's his opinion. That was his opinion. That is  
16 the way I would characterize his opinion at the time.

17 Q. Did you ever ask him or did anyone ask him in your  
18 presence on what you based that opinion?

19 A. I can't recall.

20 Q. Did you have any opinions at that time as to whether  
21 there were prisoners of war still held in Southeast Asia?

22 A. I did.

23 Q. And what was your opinion during that time of the  
24 candidacy of Ronald Reagan?

25 A. Well, it was a long period, but I believe that there

1 were POW's and MIA's, and I had nothing on which to base it  
2 except trace elements of evidence, if you will, like one would  
3 read about from time to time, sightings that would appear in  
4 the newspaper, stories that I would hear, discussions that I  
5 would have with various and sundry people; stories from POW's  
6 like Admiral Stockdale and others that I had heard who led me  
7 to believe that there was a high probability that there could  
8 be POW's and MIA's, even by 1979-'80, that time frame.

9 It was not a campaign issue, as you recall, but  
10 whenever the opportunity arose, the Governor took advantage of  
11 it to declare that he would do all that he could to get POW's  
12 and MIA's back.

13 Q. Did you have any sense from then candidate Reagan as  
14 to the numbers of POW's or MIA's that he believed existed?

15 A. No. I think he had no fixed idea.

16 Q. Did you have a fixed idea yourself in this time  
17 period?

18 A. No, but I thought it likely that there were dozens,  
19 perhaps 100 or more. But the odds were that somebody was  
20 still alive by the time we took office 12 years ago.

21 Q. During the candidacy period, was there a plan, even  
22 in the most general sense by the Reagan team, on how to  
23 approach the POW issue once Ronald Reagan was elected to  
24 office?

25 A. There was so much on our plate during 1980 that this

1 believe -- I know it came from the State Department. But we  
2 didn't take the by -- we didn't ask for a by your leave from  
3 the Department of State in this case. They had to --  
4 obviously had to know about it. I don't remember who knew in  
5 State, but --

6 Q. I'm sorry, you don't remember.

7 A. I don't remember who would have been --

8 Q. Because that was the question I was going to ask,  
9 who was the contact at State.

10 A. Maybe I told Al Haig.

11 Q. And at the Department of Defense, do you recall who  
12 would have been involved with this?

13 A. Well it wouldn't have been Weinberger or Carlucci,  
14 typically, so it must have been Clay. I presume you're going  
15 to talk to Freddy Clay anyway, so as Undersecretary for Policy  
16 he would be the most effective, and you're certainly going to  
17 talk to Rich Armitage; he knows as much as anyone about this.  
18 I haven't talked to him about it in some years.

19 Q. Now, it was your understanding from talking to the  
20 CIA that there were going to be Americans on the team going  
21 in. There were going to be Laotians who had to guide the team  
22 in.

23 A. And I presume Vietnamese.

24 Q. You indicate that it took a long time, and I think  
25 you said too long a time.

1           A.    And to come back to the careers, I just want to  
2 finish the point.

3           Q.    That's the question I was going to come back to.

4           A.    The careers of people who signed off on the notion  
5 that they were all accounted for and you couldn't account for  
6 any more, that's what I mean careers are built on this. And  
7 you go back into the Office of POW/MIA Affairs in the  
8 Pentagon, or whatever the dickens they call it, and find out  
9 just how many people were in the office over the last span of  
10 years, since 1975. Pretty many, a lot of people were, a long  
11 time. I shouldn't say '75, I should go back to '65 to be  
12 perfectly accurate about it. It's a longer span still since  
13 the Johnson administration.

14          Q.    Now with respect to the careers were at stake.

15          A.    It's a political opinion I'm giving you.

16          Q.    Okay, do you remember anyone that you dealt with  
17 that took the position that there couldn't be any alive and  
18 there was no sense of sending a team in, or, you know, from  
19 any agency?

20          A.    At that time?

21          Q.    Yes.

22          A.    I can't remember anybody specifically, but I do  
23 remember opposition to the idea.

24          Q.    Do you remember what agency?

25          A.    I believe it came from the Pentagon, and I

1 could you make additions to the PDB?

2 A. Sure. No I didn't -- not formal additions, but  
3 during my briefing times, of course, it was not only the PDB.  
4 The President would look at the PDB, I would wait there to see  
5 if he had questions. I would discuss with him certain  
6 features of it and then go on to other matters that I had to  
7 take up with him.

8 Q. Now you also mentioned discreet channels. You said  
9 if it wasn't in the PDB, it would have gone through discreet  
10 channels.

11 A. My hand. By hand, my hand. It would not have gone  
12 to Meese, Deaver, or Baker, or any of those colleagues.

13 Q. When you say your hand, would you have had a formal  
14 point paper for the President which would set out for him what  
15 you knew?

16 A. Yes, unless I just briefed him orally, as it was  
17 occasionally.

18 Q. Do you recall whether you briefed him orally?

19 A. I delivered the picture and briefed him orally.

20 Q. So you have taken the picture up and briefed him  
21 orally.

22 A. Somewhere that picture exists. Had you heard the  
23 story before? Would you answer my question? I know you're  
24 not here to answer mine, but had you heard the story before,  
25 more than once?

1 1975 and it comes forward to 1992, that's a long span of time.  
2 And a lot of people have been in office, especially in the  
3 Pentagon, ostensibly in charge of this business of finding and  
4 getting POW's and MIA's out.

5 And, as I say, I can't recall, but there have been  
6 constant battles, waves of battle, over the issue of whether  
7 they're all out or not. And a lot of people have come to the  
8 conclusion yes, they are, or they're all accounted for, there  
9 can't be any more. Just like it can be -- it's said, perhaps,  
10 that there are no more in North Korea from the Korean War.

11 And I'm not prepared to believe any of that until  
12 I've got some more convincing and persuasive evidence. I also  
13 believe we don't have any accounting for all of the AWOL's out  
14 of Vietnam. Where are these people? They went over by the  
15 dozens, I'm sorry to say -- they went AWOL by the dozens. And  
16 who has ever accounted for them? As I understand it, they're  
17 in the POW/MIA account as well. Maybe not, I don't know  
18 whether they're on that ledger or not.

19 So all those people missing, unaccounted for all  
20 these years. I'm still not persuaded that they were all put  
21 to death or that they all died of natural causes or of torture  
22 and punishment. I am convinced that there is still a  
23 reasonable chance in 1992 that there are some alive,  
24 someplace, somewhere.

25 Q. You mentioned that --