

PROOF OF PHOTO FAKERY OFFERED

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Vietnam Friday gave a U.S. official proof that a photograph purported to show three missing American fliers is a fake, according to news reports from Vietnam.

The Vietnam News Agency said Kenneth Quinn, the U.S. deputy assistant secretary of state, was given evidence that one of the men allegedly in the photo, Air Force Col. John Leighton Robertson, has been dead for 25 years. It said Robertson was killed as his aircraft flew over the province of Hai Hung southeast of Hanoi on Sept. 16, 1966. The report, monitored in Bangkok, did not say what proof was offered to back up this claim.

Quinn is on a mission seeking information about MIAs and the validity of the photograph, which has revived hopes that some veterans may still be alive in Southeast Asia.

The Pentagon said Thursday the photo has been linked to known fakers of MIA information in Cambodia. It said much of the information accompanying the photo is untrue, but defense analysts still have not concluded that the picture itself is a fake.

"The Vietnamese side affirms its active cooperation with the United States in the resolution as quickly as possible of the problem of Americans reported missing during the war in Vietnam," said the report, which was not fully monitored due to reception problems.

Quinn arrived in Hanoi on a flight from Bangkok and met with Deputy Foreign Minister Le Mai and Ho Xuan Dich, director of the Vietnamese office on American MIAs.

Quinn was scheduled to go on Saturday to Vientiane, the capital of Laos, before returning to Thailand, said a spokesman for the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok.