

19th PLENUM
of the
U.S.-RUSSIA JOINT COMMISSION ON POW/MIAs
June 28-29, 2005
Moscow

PARTICIPATING ON THE U.S. SIDE

1. Mr. A. Denis Clift, Acting U.S. Chairman of the Commission and American Chairman of the Cold War Working Group
2. Rear Admiral Miles Wachendorf, Defense Attaché, American Embassy Moscow
3. Mr. Norman Kass, Executive Secretary and Acting American Chairman, Korean War Working Group
4. Mr. Roger D. Schumacher, Director, Joint Commission Support Directorate, and Acting American Chairman, Vietnam War Working Group
5. LTC Joe Sanchez, Senior Analyst and Acting American Chairman, World War II Working Group
6. LtCol Jeff Paxson, Senior Analyst, Vietnam War Working Group
7. LTC Mike O'Hara, Senior Analyst, Cold War Working Group
8. Mr. James Shonborn, Analyst, Korean War Working Group
9. Chief Petty Officer Mike Allen, Analyst, World War II Working Group
10. MSgt Tom Shipp, Analyst, Vietnam War Working Group
11. Mr. Yuri Boguslavsky, Chief, Joint Commission Support Directorate-Moscow
12. Mr. David Poirier, Deputy Chief, Joint Commission Support Directorate-Moscow
13. Mr. Slava Sorokin, Senior Researcher, Joint Commission Support Directorate-Moscow
14. Mr. Mikhail Smolyaninov, Researcher, Joint Commission Support Directorate-Moscow
15. Ms. Irina Koryakina, Office Administrator, Joint Commission Support Directorate-Moscow
16. Ms. Svetlana Amvrosova, Interpreter
17. Mr. Igor' Bykov, Interpreter
18. Ms. Elena Watson, Interpreter

PARTICIPATING ON THE RUSSIAN SIDE

1. General-Major (ret) Vladimir Antonovich Zolotarev, Russian Chairman, U.S.-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIAs
2. Mr. Igor Svyatoslavovich Neverov, Director, North America Desk, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

3. Colonel (ret) Aleksandr Semenovich Orlov, Russian Chairman, Korean War Working Group
4. Colonel Nikolai Ivanovich Nikiforov, Russian Chairman, World War II Working Group
5. Colonel Sergei Aleksandrovich Ilyenkov, Technical Representative, Chief of Archival Services, General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, and Acting Russian Chairman, Cold War Working Group
6. Mr. Sergei Mazharov, Deputy to General Zolotarev and Acting Russian Chairman, Vietnam War Working Group
7. Colonel Valeriy Arkadyevich Sudkov, Chief, Border Guards' Archive, Federal Border Guard Service
8. Mr. Vladimir Ivanovich Korotaev, Deputy Director, Russian State Military Archives (RGVA)
9. Colonel Vladimir Viktorovich Kozin, Director, Center for the Rehabilitation of Victims of Political Repression, Ministry of Internal Affairs
10. Captain First Rank Igor Vladimirovich Shchetin, Director, Central Naval Archives, Gatchina
11. Rear Admiral (ret) Boris Gavorilovich Novyy, Consultant
12. Mr. Oleg Vyacheslavovich Shapovalov, North America Desk, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
13. Mr. Aleksandr Zakharov, North America Desk, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
14. Mr. Vadim Yurevich Chebanov, Vice-President, "Electronic Archive"

OPENING SESSION

The Opening Session of the 19th Plenum of the U.S.-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIAs, convened at 10:15 am, June 28, 2005, in the Petrovskiy Hall, Hotel National, Moscow. Russian Chairman General Zolotarev opened the session by welcoming its participants and noting that our Joint Commission, which has existed since March 1992, has clarified the fates of about one million persons. He noted that the "classic variant" of our Commission on the Russian side ceased to exist on April 30, 2005, but he said that our bilateral Commission remains alive, is developing, and has a good future.

General Zolotarev requested that his high regards be passed to the "veterans" of our Commission, especially to Ambassador Malcolm Toon, General Lajoie, Congressman Sam Johnson, and former Senator Bob Smith. He praised the hard and scrupulous work of these Commission "veterans."

General Zolotarev presented to Acting American Chairman A. Denis Clift a copy of his recently published monograph, "All-Russia Book of Memory: 1941-1945."

Zolotarev introduced the members of the Russian side, noting especially the assignments for each working group. He said that Colonel Nikiforov would chair the World War II Working Group for the Russian side; Colonel Ilyenkov would chair the Cold War Working Group; Mr. Mazharov would chair the Vietnam War Working Group, and Colonel Orlov would chair the Korean War Working Group.

General Zolotarev noted that the U.S. side had posed 15 questions about the effect of the recent reorganization of the Russian side on the work of our Joint Commission. He said that these questions were legitimate, but a response must await a decision from the Russian President on the final organization of the Russian side. President Putin's April 30, 2005, decree changed the format of the Russian side, but it also confirmed the need to develop the Commission further.

Zolotarev observed that the April decree established a new "Interagency Commission on Prisoners of War, Internees, and Missing in Action." He said that the issues of staffing and the functioning of this new Commission remained to be established, but our common goals—for example, continued research at the Central Archives of the Defense Ministry at Podolsk and field research in Kamchatka—will continue. He said that it is important to hold the 19th Plenum during this transition period and expressed the view that the Russian side's reorganization ought to be complete by July or August. This, he noted, will provide a new impetus for the Commission's work.

General Zolotarev said that the President's decree appointed General-Lieutenant Vladimir Anatolyevich Shamanov as the head of the new Commission, and Zolotarev passed along General Shamanov's warm regards and his wish for a successful 19th Plenum. He regrets his inability to attend the plenum because of a previous engagement with veterans in the Kremlin. Zolotarev indicated that answers to the questions posed by the American side might be forthcoming during a meeting the following day between Mr. Clift and General Shamanov. Finally, Zolotarev noted that Shamanov had asked Zolotarev to remain as Russian Chairman of the Joint Commission until all decisions on the Commission's organization have been made.

General Zolotarev welcomed the U.S. delegation and wished the 19th Plenum success.

Mr. Clift thanked General Zolotarev for his remarks, especially his praise of the work of the Commission's American "veterans." He reviewed the high points in the Commission's accomplishments, including two major, comprehensive reports and its work to clarify the fates of thousands of Soviet and American servicemen.

Mr. Clift congratulated the Russian side on the 60th anniversary of victory in Europe, which was observed in Russia on May 9, 2005. He said that it is particularly fitting that our 19th Plenum should take place close to this anniversary, because the Joint Commission has done much to clarify the fates of missing Soviet citizens from World War II, and the Russian and American people should know about the Commission's important contributions to this humanitarian objective.

Mr. Clift presented General Zolotarev with a framed photograph of the new World War II memorial in Washington, D.C. He also presented the Russian side with archival materials collected by Commission researchers that clarify the fates of 17, 463 Soviet servicemen. The U.S. researchers found these materials in the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Finland, and in the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration. General Zolotarev expressed the gratitude of the Russian side for these documents.

After introducing the U.S. side, Mr. Clift asked Rear Admiral Miles Wachendorf, U.S. Defense Attaché, American Embassy Moscow, to deliver remarks. The Admiral said there is no greater service that a person can render than to give up his life in defense of his nation, and the Commission's work in bringing closure to surviving family members is very important. He noted that U.S.-Russian cooperation is constantly improving, citing recently concluded, joint military exercises in Russia and Germany, which stand as examples of good progress in our bilateral relationship. He said that he speaks for the senior leadership of the U.S. Government and American veterans of past conflicts in saluting the work of the Joint Commission, and he offered his assistance to the Joint Commission in advancing its work in the Russian Federation.

Mr. Clift thanked General Zolotarev for his remarks about the reorganization of the Commission's Russian side, and he invited Zolotarev to develop this theme further during the plenum's two days. He noted that the U.S. side had welcomed a new Commissioner, Senator Saxby Chambliss (R-GA), who will chair the Vietnam War Working Group on the American side. Mr. Clift introduced a video presentation by Senator Chambliss, in which the senator expressed his pleasure at becoming a U.S. Commissioner and his eagerness to assume his chair in the Commission and in the Vietnam War Working Group. Senator Chambliss noted that he would be in Moscow in August as a member of a Congressional delegation, and he looks forward to meeting at that time with his Russian counterpart, General Major Nikolai Maksimovich Bezborodov.

Mr. Clift asked the American Executive Secretary, Norm Kass, to deliver a presentation on the Commission's work since the 18th Plenum on November 18, 2002. Mr. Kass reviewed various statistics about the Commission's work since the last plenum. These included interviews conducted by each working group,

man-days spent TDY by each working group, and archival documents acquired per working group. He discussed initiatives undertaken since the 18th Plenum, including the Washington Archival Conference (April 2004), planning for a follow-on Archival Conference (November 2005), major field operations in the Russian Far East and Hungary, and documents passed by the U.S. side to the Russian side clarifying the fates of over 17,000 Soviet servicemen from World War II and the Korean War. He noted that, since the 18th Plenum, DPMO conveyed 79 next-of-kin notifications to the families of MIA servicemen based on information contained in Russian archival documents. The U.S. also has recovered and repatriated the remains of one U.S. serviceman, who is now buried in American soil, thanks largely to information located in the Russian Defense Ministry's Central Archive at Podolsk. Mr. Kass concluded with a discussion of U.S. plans to conclude archival research contracts in Russia and a training program in Hawaii for Russian forensic scientists.

Mr. Clift detailed U.S. objectives for the current plenary session. These included a review of archival research possibilities in the Korean War Working Group, a shift in focus for the Cold War Working Group to the four shoot down incidents in the Russian Far East and a reconsideration of the information contained in the memoirs of Benjamin Dodin. The World War II Working Group planned to examine past and future expeditions to the Far East to locate downed American aircraft, and the Vietnam War Working Group would discuss access for U.S. researchers to veterans of the former KGB, Soviet diplomats, military intelligence officials, and other military personnel who served in the Vietnam War. This group also planned to table a proposal to hire researchers who hold appropriate accesses and clearances to research archival holdings for the Commission in classified Russian archives.

Mr. Clift closed his remarks with a challenge to plenum participants to show real progress during working group sessions.

Before adjourning the Opening Session, General Zolotarev pressed the U.S. side to agree to the preparation of a "white book," which would contain the Joint Commission's accomplishments and describe a new research methodology that the Russian side has developed. He said that the Commission needs to take this step forward, that important materials are accumulating, and after 14 years of work, the Commission needs to "crown" its activities with this written depiction of its accomplishments. Zolotarev urged the U.S. side to agree to prepare this publication. Mr. Clift agreed to consider the issue and respond to this proposal at the plenum's Closing Session.

General Zolotarev closed the Opening Session by thanking the U.S. side for the fate-clarifying documents it had passed to the Russian side. The session concluded at 12:30 pm.

COLD WAR WORKING GROUP

U.S. Chairman for the Cold War Working Group Mr. A. Denis Clift opened the session by telling Colonel Ilyenkov that the U.S. side is satisfied with the current permissions for Admiral Novyy to research various archives and with the assistance the Russian side has rendered to both Admiral Novyy and Lieutenant-Colonel O'Hara in their ongoing investigations in the Russian Far East.

Mr. Clift informed Colonel Ilyenkov that the U.S. side now has a new direction in its work, and he invited Admiral Novyy and Lieutenant-Colonel O'Hara to discuss this new direction and to raise other relevant topics.

The U.S. side asked for help in a number of areas. These included: locating persons who worked in Military Hospital 404 and other military hospitals in the Far East Military District; Pacific Fleet authorization to search for documents that have not been transferred to the Fleet Archives; letters to the Geological Survey Service of Vladivostok and the Hydrographic Survey of the Pacific Fleet on searches in areas where U.S. planes were shot down in the Russian Far East during the Cold War; a request for help in locating and interviewing Border Guards' veterans; finding information on Aircraft Factory #315, which is an outstanding request from the 18th Plenum; and sharing of gun camera photography from the 6 Nov 1951 and 13 June 1952 shoot downs. Colonel Ilyenkov took note of these requests and promised that he would respond appropriately.

LTC O'Hara also passed to the Colonel Ilyenkov a photograph taken of the crash site that the U.S. side recently discovered near Vladivostok. The piece of equipment depicted in this photograph was manufactured by a U.S. firm called Avimeter Corporation, which did not go into business until 1947—well after the close of World War II. Therefore, the piece of equipment in the photograph could not have come from a Lend-Lease aircraft but could possibly have come from an American-piloted aircraft. The U.S. side will travel to Vladivostok next month to examine this crash site more closely, and research on this location will continue.

KOREAN WAR

The Korean War group held discussions that led to a number of agreements. Russian researchers at the Central Archives of the Defense Ministry at Podolsk will examine 64th Fighter Aviation Corps' (FAC) regimental files to

verify their declassification. Since these files are often stored separately from the files of the 64th FAC, additional work and manpower will be required from the archivists at Podolsk. The Chief of the Archival Services, Colonel Ilyenkov, agreed to support this effort.

Once the files are located, they will be made available to Commission researchers. These records are important due to the fact that search groups, formed to confirm the downing of U.S. aircraft, were established at the regimental level. It is hoped that these records will lead to more precise information to help locate the loss sites and identify potential witnesses to the loss incidents. The question as to a separate search group reporting chain was discussed, but the archival experts from the Russian side stated that while such documents are of intense interest to the U.S. side, it is highly unlikely that such reports would have received special handling 50 years ago. If they exist outside of the holdings of the 64th FAC, they may be in the individual regiment's files – as long as those files have not been destroyed.

As noted above, the search group reports are expected to provide other information beyond just the circumstances of loss. Reports already received often contain a roster identifying the Soviet servicemen assigned to these groups. Once it identifies these individuals, the U.S. side plans to target veterans who should have firsthand information about the loss incidents. The U.S. side proposed that the Russian side participate more closely in the interview program.

The U.S. side emphasized that receiving the names of the search group participants is only a portion of the puzzle; there is also a need for greater assistance from the Military Commissariats (*Voennkomaty*) to locate the veterans. Other former Soviet countries have offered similar assistance, but to date such information has not been as forthcoming from the Russians. Both sides concluded this discussion with the hope that the appointment of General Lieutenant Shamanov and the re-establishment of the Russian side's support staff would result in the provision of such assistance. The group agreed to identify one specific region, which will serve as a test case for improved access to *Voennkomaty*. Since roughly 10 percent of the Russian population resides in the Moscow region, the search will begin there. Once the Russian side establishes its support staff, this issue will move forward. Finally, the U.S. side will continue to contact Russian veterans' organizations, such as "Combat Brotherhood" and General Aushev's Commonwealth of Independent States Committee of Warrior-Internationalists, for help in working with the Commissariats.

Following extensive discussions, the working group developed an approach to correlate recorded aircraft loss sites on U.S. and Soviet maps from the Korean War period. Under the arrangement both sides agreed to, U.S. researchers will

provide their Russian counterparts loss site locations as shown in U.S. reporting from the Korean War. These data points will then be compared with Russian topographical references to resolve disparities in the way sites were designated. Access to Russian historic cartographic information is expected to improve accuracy in identifying loss locations. The U.S. side will request access to this information through the new Chairman of the Russian side of the Commission.

The working group examined the question of the “Dodin Memoirs,” an issue that the U.S. side first raised in November 1999. While differences remain as to the credibility of Dodin’s reports, the two sides agreed that the Commission should investigate fully the information contained in these memoirs.

The two sides discussed holding a second archival conference to advance the issues raised at the inaugural archival conference held at the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration in April 2004. The Russian side responded positively to this suggestion, and various Russian archivists proposed discussion topics. These included a presentation on new Russian legislation governing access to military archives and the declassification of records. Russian representatives from the Archival Services of the Russian Federation’s Ministry of Defense, Central Naval Archives, and Russian State Military Archives (RGVA) also agreed to participate in efforts to identify suitable agenda topics.

VIETNAM WAR WORKING GROUP SESSION

Mr. Mazharov opened the session by noting that he was representing General Major Nikolai Bezborodov, whose schedule in the Russian State Duma precluded his attendance at the 19th Plenum. Mazharov pledged to deliver his notes to General Bezborodov and to brief him on the working group’s proceedings.

Mr. Schumacher stated that the U.S. side had wanted to thank General Bezborodov for his efforts to keep the Russian side of the Commission within the Presidential Administration, and he asked Mazharov to pass along to General Bezborodov the gratitude of the U.S. side for his work on the Commission’s behalf.

The U.S. side began the substantive discussions by broaching the idea of having future archival searches conducted by a “trusted agent,” who would be acceptable to both sides and who would have the appropriate security clearances necessary for access to classified Russian archives. Mr. Schumacher noted that the idea of a “trusted agent” originated from the Russian side, and Russian officials had acted as such an agent for the Commission in the past. This occurred when General Bezborodov passed three lists to the U.S. side that contained facts

about American air losses in the Vietnam War. U.S. analyses indicated that there are significant time gaps in these lists, during which time American aircraft were shot down in areas where Soviet advisors were present. This indicates there is work that remains to be done, and the U.S. side asked the Russian side to suggest individuals the Russian side would trust and whom the U.S. side might hire to conduct Korean, Vietnam, and Cold War research in the Podolsk archive and the air defense academies in Tver, Smolensk, and St. Petersburg.

Mazharov responded that the U.S. side's proposal was clear, but any progress on this initiative would have to await completion of the Russian side's reorganization. Mazharov noted, however, that the search for a candidate for this work could go forward.

Lieutenant Colonel Paxson noted that the U.S. side previously has requested help in locating and interviewing former KGB officers, GRU officers, former military personnel, and former Soviet diplomats who served in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War. In some cases, the U.S. side passed lists identifying such officials and questions the U.S. side wished to pose. Paxson reiterated these requests and sought a response from the Russian side. Mazharov claimed no knowledge of the U.S. requests but promised to speak with General Bezborodov about these issues.

In the case of former KGB and GRU officers, Paxson observed that the U.S. side has had little success interviewing these individuals. The opportunity for interviews is important because of the access these Soviet officials had to American POWs and to American crash sites and seized combat equipment. Paxson explained that a single piece of a downed aircraft could have identifying numbers that would permit tracking the fragment to an individual loss incident.

Colonel Paxson elaborated further on the importance of interviews with GRU officers who participated in "special groups" (*spetsgruppy*) that were tasked by the 10th Main Directorate of the Soviet General Staff. These reserve GRU officers were drawn from the Military Industries Commission and acquired U.S. military equipment to be sent back to the Soviet Union for exploitation. These officers had access to crash sites and may have information about the current location of this equipment. Additionally, reports they generated may shed light on the fates of missing American servicemen. Mazharov again promised to pass these requests to General Bezborodov, and he noted that they could be honored once the reorganization of the Russian side is completed.

Paxson observed that other countries have provided lists of their military personnel who served in Southeast Asia, including Belarus and Ukraine, but the U.S. side has not been able to obtain similar assistance from the Russian side.

Mazharov said it is possible that Russian law forbids providing such lists, but Master Sergeant Shipp responded that the Russian side provided a partial list during the early days of the Commission that included addresses and telephone numbers. Schumacher noted the Belarusians provided detailed lists drawn from electronic databases, and if such databases exist in Minsk, then surely Moscow maintains similar databases listing its Vietnam War veterans. Mazharov expressed hope that such a database exists in Russia and that, after the reorganization is finalized, the Russian side will “have new energy” to move this work forward.

Schumacher turned the discussion to declassifying Vietnam War-era documents vis-à-vis Russian law. He noted that Russian law allows for non-intelligence information to be considered for declassification after 30 years. The Vietnam War ended in 1973 and, therefore, in theory, these materials should be eligible for declassification. Mazharov retreated to his main point, that this subject can be properly discussed and acted upon only after the signing of the final Presidential decree on reorganization of the Russian side.

Schumacher told Mazharov that, in August, the new American Chairman of the Vietnam War Working Group, Senator Saxby Chambliss, will be in Moscow. The U.S. side very much hopes that General Bezborodov will meet with him. Schumacher asked that Mazharov pass warm greetings to General Bezborodov from U.S. Chairman Jerry Jennings. Mazharov promised to pass along these greetings and all other information that was discussed to General Bezborodov soon. He concluded by noting that “everything will be decided,” and he was sure that an “apparatus” (a Russian support staff) will be created to work on the issues confronting the Joint Commission.

WORLD WAR II WORKING GROUP

The U.S. side began the session by presenting the results of its August 2004 Russian Far East mission and specific case development in Hungary, highlighting both areas as examples of U.S.-Russian cooperative success and illustrating the importance of that cooperation. At the end of the presentation on the Far East mission, in which the expedition team located a World War II-era U.S. B-24 bomber, the two sides discussed specifics of the case, next steps for analysis, and suggestions for new sources of information.

The two sides discussed several open cases in Hungary in order to underscore the need for Russian archival assistance. The U.S. side used a specific case in Hungary to illustrate the effectiveness and potential of Russian archival holdings and expertise for cases involving U.S. servicemen lost in Eastern Europe. The Russian side offered promising suggestions for research based on details presented throughout the discussion. The working discussions were creative and

generated fresh ideas, which show great potential for clarifying current and future cases.

Additionally, the U.S. side presented the Russian side with a number of research sources that require further exploration. The U.S. side requested access to documents that Soviet forces removed from Hungary during World War II. The Second and Third Ukrainian Fronts liberated Hungary and other Eastern European countries from the Germans at the end of World War II. According to archivists in Hungary, the Ukrainian forces removed local police and security service spotter reports at the end of the war. The spotter reports included sightings of aircraft shoot downs. The archivists from the Russian State Military Archives should examine the records of the intelligence units and NKVD troops assigned to both fronts to locate the spotter reports and other information on wreckage of downed American aircraft. These files may indicate burial locations of crewmen's remains that were recovered during the final days of the war. Such information should also include records of the treatment of wounded Americans and general location and order of battle information, especially from November 1944 to May 1945. The U.S. side believes that such documents are either in the Russian State Military Archives (RGVA)—if they were treated as trophy documents—or in the Central Archives of the Ministry of Defense—if they were considered military records. The U.S. side is currently working with RGVA to search its holdings for such information, but it requested that other Russian archivists search their holdings for similar information.

The U.S. side also sought assistance in locating the archival records of Soviet field hospitals in Hungary. It submitted a list of 75 American airmen of the 15th U.S. Air Force, all of whom were shot down over Hungary and ended up in territory under, or soon to be under, Soviet control. The U.S. side requested that the Defense Ministry archive and the Russian State Military Archive search for information on the individuals contained in this list.

The U.S. side then asked that the Russians search for seized German and Japanese documents; registration cards on American POWs who were held in Germany and repatriated through the Soviet Union; aircraft salvage reports; and convoy troop records for relevant information on American POWs. These searches would be conducted in the Central Archive of the Russian Defense Ministry and the Russian State Military Archive.

The U.S. side explained its next steps in pursuing the crash site discovered in August 2004 at Vestnik Bay on the Kamchatka Peninsula. It emphasized the need for Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) involvement in a controlled examination of the crash site but noted that its decision to schedule a

team to the case has not yet occurred. Further discussion of details on this expedition will depend on that commitment.

The two sides agreed that the working group's efforts have evolved to a more sophisticated level compared to the early days of the Commission. World War II case discussions are now much more specific, searches are more systematically focused, and the chances of recovering missing personnel have increased tremendously. This year will likely see the recovery of four U.S. service members from Eastern Europe, a geographical search area that relies heavily on Russian archival contributions.

SPECIAL MEETING ON ARCHIVAL RESEARCH CONTRACTS

On June 29, 2005, U.S. Executive Secretary Norm Kass chaired a meeting that explored research opportunities in various Russian Government archives. Senior representatives of the archival services of the Ministry of Defense, Russian State Military Archives, Central Naval Archives, Ministry of Internal Affairs, and Federal Border Guard Service were in attendance.

Each of the Russian representatives outlined potential areas of research that interest the U.S. side of the Joint Commission. The participants discussed each of these areas of research as they relate to the concerns of each of the Commission's four working groups. This discussion provided the U.S. side with specific information on the holdings of the archives and the manner in which the archivists might execute the requested research, including frank discussions on research scope, methods, and topics specific to each of the archives in question. This information will allow the U.S. side to more carefully and more precisely target research topics offering the greatest chance of revealing information concerning missing U.S. servicemen.

Mr. Kass led an in-depth discussion on possible individual research agreements with these archives, and he explored each archive's particular requirements and potential obstacles. Since each ministry's archives operate under different provisions within Russian federal law, this effort provided the U.S. side with a better understanding of the processes involved in conducting research in, and concluding agreements with, each archive. This understanding will allow both sides to draft research agreements in a more timely manner and hopefully will lead to increased access to archival holdings that have not been available since the earliest days of the Commission.

CLOSING SESSION

The Commission met in a closing plenary session on Wednesday, June 29. After brief introductory remarks by General Zolotarev, Mr. Clift responded to the request of the Russian side to consider preparing a “white book” to document new methodologies for conducting the Commission’s work and to account for its accomplishments. Mr. Clift noted that the U.S. side supports the idea of preparing a report that cites the Commission’s accomplishments and sets out well-defined goals for its work in the future. This is particularly timely in light of recent developments that re-define the Russian side’s role, structure, and possibly its scope of activity, he said, and he suggested that the Russian side prepare a draft outline of issues that it proposes be included in the “white book.” This would allow the two sides to begin detailed discussions about the scope of the study and the topics it would present. Once we clarify topics and timing, we could then work together in making specific writing assignments and establishing a time line for release of the final product. Mr. Clift asked for General Zolotarev’s agreement on this approach, and Zolotarev concurred.

Mr. Clift reviewed the progress in each of the Commission’s four working groups. He noted that the two sides had agreed to move forward with research contracts in a number of Russian archives, and planning also will go forward on holding a second archival conference in Washington, D.C., in November 2005. He also noted that Colonel Kozin from the archive of the Ministry of Internal Affairs had agreed to search his archive for information on missing Americans. The U.S. side gave Colonel Kozin a list of 166 American servicemen who, according to various reports, might have been incarcerated in the former USSR. The U.S. side thanked Colonel Kozin for his willingness to support the Commission’s objectives and looks forwards to the outcome of this search.

General Zolotarev stressed the need to double-check information the Commission receives, because its work involves the fates of real people. He noted that several members of the Russian side of the Commission worked with the former Russian Chairman, General Colonel Dmitri Antonovich Volkogonov, whose well-known habit was to write pieces of information about a wide range of issues on small scraps of paper. These notes were never published after his death, and such materials cannot be considered a “document” or a credible source of information. Zolotarev implied that Dodin’s “memoirs” fit the same category. He claimed that the Russian side had examined thoroughly Dodin’s assertions and had interviewed hundreds of witnesses. Nonetheless, it could not corroborate even a single report in Dodin’s memoirs.

With this statement and an expression of appreciation for the work of the U.S. and Russian sides, General Zolotarev adjourned the 19th Plenum.

MEETING WITH GENERAL SHAMANOV'S DEPUTY

On June 29, 2005, Mr. Clift met with General Major Aleksandr Valentinovich Kirilin, Acting Deputy to the newly-appointed Chairman of Russia's Interagency Commission on Prisoners of War, Internees, and Missing in Action. General Kirilin is the Director of the Memorial Center of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation. Present on the American side besides Mr. Clift were Norm Kass, Roger Schumacher, and Yuri Boguslavsky. Present on the Russian side besides General Kirilin were General Zolotarev, Colonel Orlov, Colonel Nikiforov, Mr. Zakharov, and Svetlana Amvrosova (interpreter).

General Kirilin expressed regrets that General Shamanov was unable to meet with Mr. Clift because he is currently at the Presidential Administration presenting his recommendations on the function and structure of the new Russian Commission. Kirilin noted that President Putin's April 30 decree that established the Russian Commission also assigned responsibility for staff support to the Defense Ministry. He announced that, according to the proposal being presented to the Presidential Administration, a special department in Kirilin's organization—the "Memorial Center"—would comprise the Commission's staff and would be dedicated to the work of the Commission.

Mr. Clift discussed the work of the bilateral U.S.-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIAs, which has worked since 1992 in a noble, forward-looking effort to account for missing Russian and American personnel. He said that the Commission has accomplished much, and it wants to do much more in the interests of both Russia and the U.S. Mr. Clift cited as an example U.S. efforts to help Russia clarify the fates of its missing servicemen from Afghanistan, accounting for 160 Russian servicemen so far, based on information painstakingly acquired and provided by the U.S. side to the Russian side. This information has been collected from the reporting of American diplomats, defense attaches, and intelligence officers worldwide. Wherever the U.S. side finds relevant information on missing Soviet servicemen, it passes it on to the Russian side. Mr. Clift noted that the U.S. Armed Forces operating now in Afghanistan are under standing orders to collect information about missing Soviet POWs and military servicemen. During the first Chechen conflict, the U.S. side also provided blood collection and DNA analysis kits that helped the Russian side positively identify its deceased servicemen from that conflict, and there have been numerous expressions of gratitude from the Russian Government for this support.

Mr. Clift cited as well Russian assistance to the U.S. side, supporting U.S. excavation of the crash site of a World War II-era bomber and the repatriation of the remains of seven crew members in August 2001. American access to the files

at the Central Archives in Podolsk has helped to clarify the fates of hundreds of Korean War-era American pilots and air crew members, and the Russian side also has helped the U.S. side clarify the fates of Cold War reconnaissance pilots and crews. Mr. Clift expressed the hope of the U.S. side that the new Russian Commission would enable this important and noble work to continue.

General Kirilin responded that the Commission's work is of great interest in the Ministry of Defense, the General Staff, and in the Memorial Center, which is responsible for determining the fates of missing Soviet and Russian personnel. He noted that in the past, the mission of the Memorial Center had been to account for missing Soviet soldiers from World War II only, but the work of the Joint Commission on missing Soviet soldiers from Afghanistan and Chechnya led to a decision to charge Memorial with this responsibility as well, thus uniting the work done by Memorial and Zolotarev's Commission. Kirilin said that he receives hundreds of letters from Russian citizens asking about the fates of their missing relatives, and this number is increasing yearly. Russian citizens now believe that it is possible to determine the fates of the missing, and he attributed this to the successful work of the U.S.-Russia Joint Commission. He said that the leadership of Russia positively assesses the Commission's work, and it wants this work to continue and to become more effective.

General Kirilin said that General Shamanov asked him to deliver the message that the Commission's task will not change, and the level of its support and effort will not decline. In fact, General Shamanov actually said that the Commission will retain its presidential status with responsibility for the same tasks and exercising the same authority as the former Commission. He added that most of the Russian members on the former Commission will be retained in the new organization. General Shamanov will be responsible for reporting routinely on the work of the Commission to the leadership of the Presidential Administration through the Russian Head of Government—the Prime Minister. In turn, the Defense Ministry has charged General Kirilin with establishing a staff that will ensure the Commission's functioning at maximum effectiveness.

Mr. Clift expressed satisfaction that the Commission's work will not only continue but will be made more effective. He expressed U.S. readiness to work with the Russian side to bring this new relationship into being. He asked whether the creation of a new Commission on the Russian side necessitated a new government-to-government agreement.

General Kirilin did not see the need for a new document to govern the Commission's work with the U.S. side, but this issue, too, is reportedly addressed in General Shamanov's proposal and is being considered at the Presidential Administration. Kirilin believes that the terms of reference established by the

Russian president 12 [*sic*] years ago when the Commission was formed apply today, and the new Commission only needs to proceed along the same lines. He noted that a new presidential decree will be published (the draft exists now) and will define the functions, tasks, and aims of the Russian Commission. Reportedly, it will establish requirements by which the work of the Russian side will proceed, with specific rules governing travel and funding by the Russian side. These provisions are necessary, but General Kirilin closed by saying that a new government-to-government agreement probably was not necessary.

Mr. Clift answered that the U.S. side will await the Russian Federation's decisions and stands ready to cooperate, including sending its experts to ensure that both sides are comfortable with the course they will take together.

General Kirilin noted that the decisions on most of these questions already have been made and approved by the Head of Government. The document is currently under legal review, after which it will be dispatched to the Head of State for his approval. Time will be required to accomplish these steps, Kirilin said, but the time remaining before this is concluded will not be very long.

Mr. Clift repeated the willingness of the U.S. side to work with the Russian side, and he asked General Kirilin to pass to General Shamanov Mr. Clift's best wishes. He presented General Kirilin with a framed photograph of the new World War II memorial in Washington, D.C., and he asked General Kirilin to present this gift to General Shamanov on behalf of the U.S. side. Mr. Clift also presented General Kirilin with a drinking glass etched with the heraldry of the Joint Military Intelligence College, of which Mr. Clift is president. Mr. Clift also provided General Kirilin two copies of the four-page brochure the U.S. side prepared last fall to demonstrate the benefits that have accrued to both the Russian and American sides through the work of the Joint Commission.

Before concluding the meeting, General Kirilin noted that the draft presidential decree contains specific provisions for the new Commission to have its own stamp, heraldry, and an award for personnel who serve in the Commission. He suggested that the Russian side would present a gift to the U.S. Chairman at the next meeting depicting one of these symbols.