Ex-POWS Give Him Ovation

ixon Hits Security Leaks

By William Claiborne Washington Post Staff Writer

the sources of government lance activities. news leaks yesterday and challenged the federal bureaucracy to adopt a "new sense of responsibility and dedication" in protecting national secrets.

country to quit making na- dependent on government offitional heroes of those who steal secrets and publish them keeping secrets. in newspapers," Mr. Nixon told an appreciative audience of nearly 600 returned American prisoners of war.

during a State Department China and the Soviet Union, "briefing" of the returned and he added, "Had we not POWs did not include any ref- had that kind of secrecy erence to a special White you men would still be in Ha-House task force he created to noi." stop news leaks. Known as

is under investigation for al-tended a gala banquet at the President Nixon denounced leged illegal domestic surveil- White

But his forceful remarks on government confidentiality repeatedly returned to the theme that world peace is dependent on U.S. bargaining strength, and the nation's bar-"I think it is time in the gaining strength-in turn-is cials who are responsible for

Mr. Nixon traced the government's role in maintaining secrecy throughout the sensitive stages of the Vietnam war The President's comments and in preliminary talks with

The returned prisoners, who

"the plumbers," the task force with their wives later at-House, warmly in response to the remarks about national security.

But when Mr. Nixon referred obliquely to the publication of the Pentagon Papers in a sharply critical vein, the ex-POWs rose spontaneously and cheered loudly for nearly a minute.

"We must have confidentiality. We must have secret communications," Mr. Nixon said. Echoing the national security emphasis of his explanation of the Watergate scandal Tuesday, the President added, "I'm going to meet my responsibility to protect the national secrets of America . . ."

Addressing himself "everybody in the bureauc-

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President Nixon flashes V for victory sign as he gets standing ovation from audience of ex-POWS assembled at State Department.

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racy," Mr. Nixon urged, "If a document is classified, keep it classified."

The former prisoners, some of them still on crutches or hobbling in casts, appeared moved when Mr. Nixon recalled that prior to the peace agreement, he had been "Bring them admonished: home, but bring them home on their feet and not on their

"I can say to you, this is the most distinguished group I've ever addressed, and I've never been prouder of any group," the President declared.

The President alluded to the ex-prisoners' homecoming earlier this year and to the accommaying patriotic speeches made by some upon landing at Clark Air Force Base in the Philippines.

"By what you did and what you said, you helped turn this country around . . . You have built up America's faith," Mr. Nixon said.

Before and after his "well done" address in the State Department auditorium, Mr. acknowledged the Nixon cheering ex-prisoners by flashing a "V" sign and the avia-tor's traditional "thumbs up." Most of the returnees are Navy or Air Force pilots.

While the presidential briefing was going on, Mrs. Nixon and Mrs. Spiro Agnew hosted a reception for the wives and girl friends of the POWs on the eighth floor of the State Department.

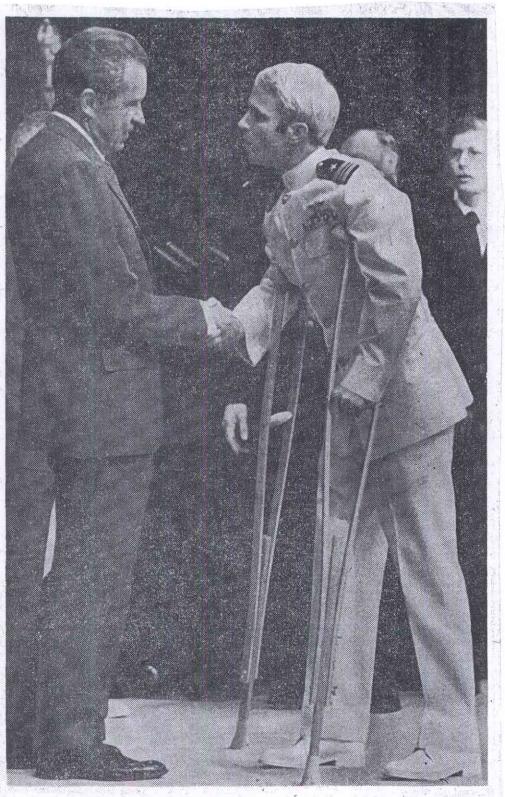
Earlier in the day, the ex-POWs and their guests at-tended a Bloody Marys-andbreakfast gathering hosted by the Hilton Hotels Corp. and the Washington Hilton.

For many, the occasion was the first stateside reunion since the prisoners' repatriation four months ago.

As Navy whites, Air Force blues and Army and Marine Corps greens blended together in the crowded ballrooms, shouts of recognition went up and happy friends embraced.

"Hey, Moose Cowboy!" gree Hey greetings were shouted from table to table, and reminiscenes were exchanged in an exclusive sort of way about such places as the Hanoi Hilton, Heartbreak Hotel, the Zoo and other Vietnamese North camps.

prisoners Many talked in excited anticipation ness from a seemingly continireturn home Friday. "I'm go- round of celebrations was the of meeting the President in a wous round of homecoming ing to pull the beach over my red, white and blue banquet reception line at the State De-levents, talked of solitude.



United Press International

Mr. Nixon greets Navy Lt. Cdr. John Mc-Cain III, shot down near Hanoi in 1967, at

State Department reception for former prisoners, most of them career aviators.

prison | partment, and, later, of having | dinner at the White House.

A few, acknowledging weari-

Air Force pilot from Cape said. Cod, Mass., said he planned to

Lt. Col. Kenneth North, an shindigs for a while," North

But the main event of the head and forget about these and entertainment show last night on the south lawn of the White House.

White House.

Billed by White House officials as "the biggest sitdown dinner" ever held at the Executive Mansion, the affair was an unabashedly patriotic show featuring Hollywood celebrities more than 200 hottles of icen fare, included roost six. the White House itself.

The tent was erected several weeks ago for the nearly 1,300

ties, more than 200 bottles of ican fare-included roast sirchampagne and a huge red loin of beef au jus, cornsticks, and yellow striped tent larger potatoes, garden vegetables, even than the main portion of and strawberry mousse. The wines were from California.