

Never in the history of the United States have prisoners of war been a political issue. Nixon changed all of that preparatory to his 1972 campaign and in so doing not only commercialized and politicized national and personal tragedies but also painted himself into a diplomatic corner.

Neither was accidental. As Colson said he's tampered his own grandmother for Nixon, so also would Nixon. So, he pretended that all the things he did that delayed the return of the prisoners were steps designed to speed their repatriation. And he then pretended that McGovern would elay this repatriation. Were this not sufficiently dishonest, he then pretended that somehow, short of negotiating a settlement, he could bring these men back to their families.

Never, not even in delclared wars - and Nixon perpetuated an undeclared one, in which none of the rules of warfare applied - have war prisoners been returned prior to agreement upon a peace.

Among the steps Nixon took as soon as possible to prolong the war and delay the return of the prisoners was to give the Thieu dictatorship in Vietnam a veto over the negotiations in Paris. Because peace could mean the end of Thieu, naturally Thieu did all he could to delay the coming of any kind of peace. This, no less naturally, delayed repatriation.

The genuineness of Nixon's concern for the prisoners and the other veterans is more easily determined from almost anything other than his self-serving words. He does have a record. When he was increasing the military budget and trying to keep from further increasing the greatest deficits in our history, hallmark that they are of his Presidency, he cut the expenditure of all other parts of the budget, most of all those parts designed to help those in greatest need.

Congress enacted an aid-to-education bill in the fall of 1972, during the election campaign. It included an appropriation of what for the present budget is a small sum, \$2,000,000 in grants to colleges in educating, recruiting, counselling, tutoring and other aids to veterans seeking an education. Nixon just refused to spend the money as appropriated and enacted into law by the Congress, part of his "impoundment".

Not until May 22, 1963 did Nixon agree to put our money where his mouth is. A veterans groups had filed suit in federal district court in Washington to get Nixon to comply with the law. On March 27 the Office of Education had made an offer to publish rules and start making grants, but without any firm commitment to actually spend the money appropriated. Nixon's gesture, obviously, was another stall and meant nothing. He could publish all the rules in the world, but publishing them did not give the colleges the money or the veterans for whom he'd have us believe his heart bled the help they needed.

Finally, under pressure from Congress and the court, and leaned on a bit by The Watergate sensations, / His Office of Education ^{capitulated} ~~agreed~~ only 10 days before the day of the beginning of the year for which the expenditures were authorized and to which it was limited.