

U.S. Voices Concern Over 9 Americans Held by Vietnamese

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WASHINGTON, May 29—The State Department voiced "serious concern" today about the fate of nine American citizens who have been held prisoner by Communist authorities in South Vietnam for more than six weeks.

Robert L. Funseth, the department spokesman, said that the United States had repeatedly asked the North Vietnamese Government and the Provisional Revolutionary Government in Saigon for news of the prisoners in recent weeks.

"There was no response," he said at a press briefing.

He said the questions had been sent "through a number of channels"—some of them private.

The nine Americans are understood to be "prisoners in a camp at Pleiku" in the Central Highlands of South Vietnam, he said.

Of the group of nine Americans, Mr. Funseth said that eight had been captured by Communist forces at Ban Me Thuot on March 10, and that the ninth, a State Department consular official, had been captured April 16 at Phan Rang.

The eight are: Mr. and Mrs. John D. Miller, Wycliffe Bible translators from the summer Institute of Linguistics, and their daughter, Lucille, of Houghton, N. Y.; Betty J. Mitchell of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, from Bend, Ore.; Mr. and Mrs. Richard Phillips, also of the Missionary Alliance, from St. Paul, Minn.; Jay Scarborough, a Ford Foundation scholar from Camp Hill, Ohio; Paul A. Struharik, an official of the United States Agency for International Development, from Barberton, Ohio.

The State Department official was James F. Lewis of the consulate at Nha Trang.