

Families' Reaction to POW Raid

Washington

The United States raid on a prisoner of war camp near Hanoi was praised yesterday by a leader of the largest organization of families of missing and captive American servicemen. But one wife said the mission was politically motivated.

The families "will surely be heartened by this new evidence of concern on the part of the administration," said Mrs. Bobby G. Vinson, national coordinator of the 2500 - member National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia.

"Despite the failure of the rescue mission," the wife of a missing Air Force colonel added at a news conference, "it was daring and courageous in concept and execution, and we owe a debt of gratitude to those volunteers who were willing to risk their own lives in trying to aid our husbands and sons."

However, Mrs. F.H. Kushner, who said her husband — an Army major — has been held prisoner in South Vietnam by the National Liberation Front during the past three years, charged in an interview the raid was "politically motivated, not directed to showing any great concern for the prisoners."

Mrs. Kushner, of Danville, Va., contended the mission was "intended to wipe the news of the bombing raids off the front pages."

"Instead of playing Mickey Mouse games," said Mrs. Kushner, the administration "should accomplish what it said it would do" for prisoners of war.

She said Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird met with some wives of prisoners in July, 1969, and told them there would be no substantial withdrawals until the release of all prisoners was negotiated.

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