

Merry-Go-Round

**A Plot to Kidnap
Hanoi's Leaders**



Jack Anderson

A BACKROOM controversy has erupted over Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird's threat to take "unusual means" to free U.S. prisoners in Vietnam and White House press secretary Ron Ziegler's warning that North Vietnamese leaders would be held "personally responsible" for any retaliation against prisoners.

One idea that has been discussed at the highest levels is to send helicopter commandos into Hanoi to kidnap or assassinate North Vietnamese leaders who are responsible for prisoner abuse.

The idea of dispatching a suicide squad to wipe out Hanoi's top leaders had been considered and discarded earlier. It was decided that the slain leaders would merely be replaced by others even more intransigent. A plot against the Hanoi leadership might also encourage them to organize terrorist attacks upon U.S. leaders. In any case, this wasn't the way Washington wanted to fight the Vietnam War.

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BUT President Nixon is coming around to the view, say insiders, that drastic action may be required to protect our prisoners. He hasn't ruled out the possibility of using commandos to retaliate against the North Vietnamese leaders who sanction the mistreatment of prisoners.

Meanwhile, Laird's hint that unorthodox means — presumably new commando raids — would be used to free American prisoners has caused misgivings in the backrooms. The abortive Son Tay raid,

they feel, has now alerted the North Vietnamese who will guard the prison camps against airborne commandos.

All five known prison camps are located in the Hanoi environs.

There is also concern that the guards may kill the prisoners at the approach of a raiding party. Previous rescue attempts in South Vietnam failed. But a South Vietnamese unit once stumbled accidentally upon a prison camp. Before the prisoners could be rescued, the Viet Cong guards bashed in the head of the only American prisoner.

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THE American Medical Association has deliberately sought to hold down the number of doctors in this country they can continue to charge high

This is accomplished by control of medical schools' half of the applicants

Dr. Neil Solomon
Health Director
Johns Hopkins
the AMA, +
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Ur
dev