

Fulbright Questions U.S. Raid

WASHINGTON (AP) — Sen. J. W. Fulbright said today there were indications U.S. officials knew no prisoners were at an alleged POW camp in North Vietnam and that a rescue attempt there last month "had other purposes."

The Arkansas Democrat commented as he blocked for the second time immediate consideration of a resolution commending the Army and Air Force rescue raiders for heroism.

Fulbright asked for and received a unanimous Senate agreement to have the resolution referred to his Foreign Relations Committee for a period of 10 days which would bring it back to the floor before adjournment, now expected about Dec. 19.

THE RESOLUTION was introduced by Sen. Robert J. Dole, R-Kan., a leading administration spokesman on the floor.

Dole introduced the same resolution a few days after the raid was revealed by the Pentagon last month but Fulbright blocked an immediate vote on the grounds that it might be misunderstood as Senate endorsement of administration war policies.

Objecting again today, Fulbright said comments by administration officials and members of the raiding party "indicated officials knew there were no prisoners there and that the mission had other purposes."

"**SERIOUS QUESTIONS** have been raised as to what the real purpose was," Fulbright said. "The Senate should not commit itself without more background knowledge of it."

The House passed yesterday a resolution praising the rescue effort, on a vote of 347 to 15.

The House resolution said the POW issue should be given top priority at the Paris peace talks and that no permanent agreement should be signed on any aspect of the war until there is substantive progress on the prisoner question.

Supporters said the resolution honored the bravery of the commandos who attempted the raid. Opponents, led by Rep. Robert L. Leggett, D-Calif., said the resolution would "give encouragement to the Pentagon to try the same thing again."

In a related development, the Army announced Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird would visit Ft. Bragg, N.C., tomorrow to decorate servicemen who raided the prison camp near Hanoi.