

SENATORS RECEIVE HANOI P. O. W. LIST

Representatives of Kennedy
and Fulbright Get Names

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WASHINGTON, Dec. 22 —

North Vietnam released today what it described as a final and definitive list of all the American prisoners of war it is holding.

The list, which was delivered by North Vietnamese diplomats in Paris to representatives of two Democratic Senators, carried the names of 339 prisoners of war still being held, of whom 20 have reportedly died and nine have been released.

The names were supplied to representatives of Senators Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts and J. W. Fulbright of Arkansas, both critics of the Administration's policy in Indochina. It was the first time an authorized North Vietnamese list had been provided to an elected American official.

However, United States officials said tonight that the names on the list were the same as those previously compiled from information received from peace organizations and the Swedish Government, which relayed a lengthy list from Hanoi last month.

The officials stressed they

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had no way of judging the validity of the North Vietnamese claim that the new list was complete.

The new list does not account for 10 airmen carried by the Defense Department as prisoners in North Vietnam and 412 other Americans who are listed as missing in action. Many of those listed as missing are presumed to be dead.

The deaths of all of the 20 men listed as dead by the North Vietnamese had previously been reported by Cora Weiss, co-chairman of the Committee of Liaison with Families of Servicemen Detained in North Vietnam.

The Nixon Administration reacted coolly to the delivery of the list, insisting that with the exception of the dates provided for the deaths of the 20, it already had the information provided in it.

The State Department spokesman, Robert J. McCloskey, declined to describe the release of the list as a significant step forward or read into it any change in the North Vietnamese attitude on the prisoner issue.

"The whole thing is a well-executed maneuver designed to divert attention from the fact that the North Vietnamese are not doing anything to relieve

the plight of the prisoners this Christmas," a senior official in the State Department observed.

"This is nothing more than old information passed through two fancy channels in an effort to get the maximum possible propaganda," he added.

"If you start from absolute zero I suppose it is important that they are providing at least a list," Mr. McCloskey said, "but that is a far step from releasing the prisoners and having proper care and facilities provided for them in a way that can be certified by international organizations."

Senator Kennedy and Senator Fulbright wrote to President Ton Duc Than of North Vietnam several months ago asking that Hanoi make public the names of the prisoners it was holding. The Senators received cable grams last Sunday inviting them or their representatives to come to Paris to receive a reply. The cables were signed by Mai Van Bo, the chief of the North Vietnamese mission in Paris.

Senator Kennedy dispatched John E. Nolan, a close friend and Washington lawyer, and Senator Fulbright sent James G. Lowenstein, a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee staff. The two men met separately this morning with North Vietnamese officials in Paris and received

copies of the list and two letters from President Thang.

Mr. Kennedy was the first to disclose the release of the list. At a new conference in the senate, Mr. Kennedy said that Mr. Nolan had read him the list over trans-Atlantic

phone and then had delivered it to David K. E. Bruce, the chief United States negotiator at the Paris peace talks. The embassy in Paris then transmitted the lists to Washington.

The Senator said that the North Vietnamese had told Mr. Nolan that the list was official and complete. He added that the release of the names was a tribute to the courage of the wives of the prisoners. Discussing the meaning of the North Vietnamese gesture, he added: "If there is any message I think it is a small message to the wives."

In a statement issued later in the day, Senator Fulbright expressed his appreciation of the North Vietnamese move and said "the families of the prisoners and the American people will appreciate this humanitarian gesture coming at the Christmas season."

He added that although the names provided on the lists might not be new, "the Government of North Vietnam now declares this list to be final and definitive."

The Senators' positive reac-

tion to the North Vietnamese move was in sharp contrast to that of the Administration. The White House press secretary, Ronald L. Ziegler, would say only that the lists had been received and would be studied carefully.

Many Administration officials appeared to be piqued by the political elements in the North Vietnamese maneuver.

"I know of at least 10 Senators who have written similar letters to the North Vietnamese," one official said. "It is easy to tell from the two they selected who they expect to become President of the United States. They also picked the two who would give them maximum publicity."

Administration officials said they would probably release the new list as soon as it had been thoroughly studied and the families of the prisoners had been provided with pertinent information.

One source said the dates of the deaths of the 20 men ranged from the day of their capture to as much as a year after the men had been caught. The dates were spread over a five-year period, beginning in 1965.