



C. B. S. News

BELIEVED TO BE PRISONER IN NORTH VIETNAM: A frame from a Communist movie film shown on TV news show last night. It is said to depict the capture of an American soldier at Conthien, a northern military outpost in South Vietnam, in October, 1968.

Foe's Film Depicts Capture of G.I.'s in Battle

By JAMES M. NAUGHTON

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Jan. 4—The Columbia Broadcasting System televised an enemy film tonight in which about a dozen American fighting men are depicted as surrendering to the Vietcong in South Vietnam.

The film, shown at the start of the "C.B.S. Evening News" program, was said to be of Americans captured by the enemy in October, 1968, near Conthien, a military outpost in northern South Vietnam, near the demilitarized zone.

The Defense Department said tonight that there was no way of determining whether the film was "authentic," but Jerry W. Friedheim, a Pentagon spokesman, added that "it obviously shows Americans under Vietcong control."

Mr. Friedheim said the film was the first to become available that showed Americans believed held captive inside South Vietnam. He said the Defense

Department had encouraged C.B.S. to telecast the film in hope that relatives of the captured Americans might be able to identify them.

Surrender Depicted

The brief film clip showed enemy soldiers, heavily camouflaged, firing weapons. Moments later it depicted Americans surrendering and then being herded along a jungle trail.

On the uniform jackets of several of the Americans the words "U.S. Army" were clearly visible. Others appeared to be the combat uniform commonly worn by United States marines.

Mr. Friedheim said that a number of American combat units had served in the Conthien area. During late 1968, most of them were marine units, he said.

"We've had very little information on people captured in South Vietnam," Mr. Friedheim said. The Pentagon estimated

that only about 80 Americans were held prisoner by the Communists as a result of their capture within South Vietnam.

According to Mr. Friedheim, it was possible that the film had been prepared by the Vietcong, using Americans who were taken prisoner in several locations.

C.B.S. said that a statement accompanying the film asserted that the captives were only a few of the "tens of thousands" of United States and South Vietnamese troops killed, wounded or taken prisoner in the Conthien area during 1968.

Whether or not the film was of an authentic battle scene, Mr. Friedheim said, the important thing was that it appeared to show Americans who previously had not been confirmed as captives. He urged, as did C.B.S., that anyone who might be able to identify the captives get in touch with the casualty reporting officer at any military installation in the United States.