

SFChronicle

JUL 2 1971

## POW Wives Talk About Peace Plan

The Vietnamese Communists' new POW proposal at the Paris peace talks was greeted with more suspicion than optimism here yesterday by two wives of the American pilots shot down over Southeast Asia.

The women spoke at a Press Club press conference set up by Pacific Gas and Electric Co. public relations men who said they had been asked to do so "by a high Administration official."

The wives also attacked several prominent politicians for being "Johnny-come-latelys who are using the POWs as a political football."

"Senator Teddy Kennedy is one of the biggest jerks on the prisoner issue," said Mrs. James Evans of Alameda.

Her Navy commander husband was shot down by the Communist Pathet Lao over Laos in 1965. Since then he has been "missing in action" but she believes he is alive.

### 'CONCERN'

Mrs. Evans said that for years the Massachusetts Democrat hasn't been willing to meet with POW wives, and



MRS. JAMES EVANS  
Politicians assailed



MRS. WILLIAM BUTLER  
She's not optimistic

hasn't even answered their mail.

"Now," she said sarcastically, "there's this sudden concern for prisoners."

She was also harshly critical of Senator Vance Hartke (Dem-Ind.) and Congressman Paul McCloskey (Rep.-San Mateo) for their alleged willingness to "abandon" the POWs to reach a political settlement.

With Mrs. Evans speaking at the press conference was Mrs. William Butler of San Rafael, whose husband, an Air Force captain, has been a prisoner in North Vietnam for four years.

### REACTION

As for the Vietnamese Communists' offer yesterday to couple the release of POWs with withdrawal of American troops, Mrs. But-

ler said sadly: "I'd like to be

She and Mrs. Evans charged that the offer will probably prove to be conditional on a coalition government for South Vietnam and other provisos.

The women also expressed support for President Nixon's handling of the peace talks.

"We can't tie his hands," said Mrs. Butler. "We must leave him every option, every card to play."