

..... at this hour, a deluge of denials of that Swedish report of possible freedom for almost 200 American prisoners in North Vietnam. Hanoi calls the report a complete fabrication, but the Swedish newspaper which broke the story of the proposed airlift for next week still thinks it's true.

In Stockholm, Don [? - phonetic - Dahlqvist; Boerje Dahlqvist?], managing editor of the newspaper, Dagens Nyheter, says [voice, Dahlqvist], "We wouldn't risk our reputation as a good newspaper to print that story if I had not yesterday, and if I were not today, sure that all the important parts of this story are sound." And Dahlqvist's paper says tonight the release plan has been postponed indefinitely, but not canceled.

(End of item.)

KPFA News, 6:15 p.m. transcribed from tape

..... After the statement by Mr. Ziegler, a spokesman for SAS in Rome said that the request for the flight had come from "a private individual in Germany," that it had been a "tentative request" and that "it has been called off." The airline official said that he had spoken with the airline's office in Stockholm and the management there made it emphatically clear that they did not deal with U.S. military authorities.

..... A spokesman for Dagens Nyheter in Stockholm commented on the SAS denial of arrangements for the prisoner flight after they had at first confirmed the newspaper report. He said, "SAS is giving way to political pressure to soft-pedal the whole thing." He said that the newspaper report, which would attribute only to "sources," is "wholly correct as it stands." He continued, "When we deliberated about the publication of this report, everything seemed in order, and there was no reason to hold it back. I'm not prepared to guess what will happen now."

The AP says that the consensus of Swedish news media is that there is some substance to the reports. The state radio in Stockholm said in a commentary, "In matters of this kind those involved usually have a preconceived plan of issuing denials if the story breaks too soon. In this instance denials from the North Vietnamese mission here, and from the Paris peace talks delegation, came remarkably fast."

(End of item.)

KCBS News, 11 p.m. transcribed from tape

Good evening. This is Douglas Edwards, CBS News [New York?].

..... John Lawrence went to Stockholm to investigate the report and get the airline's story.

[Voice, Lawrence]: The facts of this mysterious and complex case involving American prisoners of war and their possible return are just now beginning to come to light. What is known is this. Last month, in mid-July, an individual in Frankfurt, Germany, contacted Scandanavian Airlines System to enquire about the feasibility and cost of sending a chartered DC-8 to Hanoi, presumably to take 187 American prisoners of war to Rome. SAS made its investigation, determined that Hanoi was not a suitable landing site and suggested as an optional measure landing in Ventiane, Laos. It reported back that it was feasible to land a DC-8 there in Ventiane and fly to Rome with the 187 men aboard. It quoted a figure of \$80,000 as the price of the charter.

The man involved, who SAS says is not connected with the United States Government or the American military, insisted on anonymity. SAS will not say which nationality he is, only that he made the contact in Frankfurt. Today SAS reports that this same man sent them a cable this morning saying the deal was off, that no plane was to go to Ventiane as scheduled on August 12th, that no prisoners were coming out. The cable said simply that the deal was being postponed.