

Release Plan Denied

UNUSUAL POW REPORT

Swedish Paper Reports Plan  
To Free 183 American POWs

AUG 5 1971

SFChronicle  
**It's News**  
**To Us, Says**  
**Nixon Aide**

Associated Press

Washington

A Swedish newspaper said today North Vietnam will free 183 American prisoners of war August 12, but the White House disavowed any knowledge of a release and flatly contradicted major points in the story.

"We cannot confirm the content of this story," presidential press secretary Ronald L. Ziegler said. "The first indication that the U.S. Government had regarding this story was from the AP dispatch out of Stockholm."

Dagens Nyheter, Sweden's largest-circulation daily, said the U.S. Command in Saigon had cabled SAS, the Scandinavian airline, asking for a charter plane to fly released prisoners from Vientiane, Laos, to New York.

Ziegler denied that. "It can be categorically stated that the U.S. Government has not been informed of any such plan nor has the U.S. participated in negotiating a plan such as described in the report out of Stockholm," he said.

"Further, the U.S. Government at any level has not requested the Scandinavian airlines, SAS, to proceed as suggested in the Swedish newspaper."

Dagens Nyheter said, "if the plans for this uttermost secret release operation are not changed," the prisoners will be flown to freedom from Vientiane, Laos.

The flight originally was scheduled for August 6 but departure was delayed until August 12, the paper said.

A prisoners' list made public by the Hanoi government last December included 339 names. The Pentagon lists 1651 American servicemen as either captured or missing in Indochina.

Fate of the American prisoners long has been a pivotal

*See Back Page*

From Page 1

point in the Paris peace talks on Vietnam, with the United States maintaining that they must be released before a final settlement could be reached.

The latest Communist peace proposal, made July 1, offered to release the prisoners simultaneously with a U.S. pullout from Vietnam if the United States would set a definite date for withdrawal of its forces.

The secrecy surrounding the operation was broken only by negotiations for the plane, the paper said.

When U.S. authorities asked for an aircraft they stressed that a medical plane was not needed, it said.

The aircraft is scheduled to fly to New York from Vientiane via Bangkok and Rome.

the report stated.

Dagens Nyheter said the Swedish government probably has been involved in negotiations for the release, but has worked in silence and has refused to comment.

The paper said it was clear that transportation from Hanoi to Vientiane would be handled by the North Vietnamese.

SAS has asked the United States for information about the reception arrangements for the POWs in New York, but had not yet received an answer, it reported.

"Several of the Americans have been in North Vietnam more than six years," the story said. "The first one was captured in August, 1964, when American warplanes first attacked North Vietnam."