

## U.S. Denies a Role In a Bid to Hanoi To Release P.O.W.'s

WASHINGTON, Aug. 5 (AP) —A State Department spokesman said today that the United States had not been a party to negotiations that would lead it to expect North Vietnam to release a large number of American prisoners of war.

Robert J. McCloskey, department press officer, commented on reports that the Scandinavian Airlines System had received an American request for a jetliner to fly 187 captured American pilots out of Hanoi. The report drew a quick White House denial.

Mr. McCloskey expressed hope that there had been no hoax perpetrated, but he said this could not be ruled out.

### McCloskey Gives Account

Putting together what he described as "the most rational explanation as of now" of the puzzling incident, Mr. McCloskey gave the following account based on a message from the United States Embassy in Stockholm, which said the information had been provided by a reliable source:

SAS in Bonn informed the airline's president in Stockholm last month that an unnamed individual, described as neither a nor a representative of any military force, with no identification of citizenship, had asked S.A.S. if it was capable of providing a flight Aug. 6 for Americans in North Vietnam. The reply was that no such capability was available.

The S.A.S. manager in Bonn pursued the matter and requested a reappraisal, saying that an urgent requirement existed for the charter and that it would do S.A.S. well to carry out the flight.

### Feasibility Study Ordered

A feasibility study then led the airline to advise its Bonn office that the flight could be arranged by Aug. 12.

At an airline board meeting in Stockholm, it was noted that a representative would fly a plane into North Vietnam.

Yesterday evening, the Swedish newspaper Dagens Nyheter called the S.A.S. president and asked about reports of the flight. The president replied that "feelers" had been made and the matter had been studied. An hour later the newspaper called S.A.S. to say that it would be publishing an article about it.

Mr. McCloskey said the United States Government then initiated inquiries in Vietnam, West Germany and wherever else that information might be obtained.