

U.S. Says Hanoi Curtails P.O.W. Letters

By HENRY GINIGER
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PARIS, Nov. 4—The United States accused North Vietnam today of cutting down vastly on the number of letters it has allowed American prisoners of war to send home.

William J. Porter, the chief American delegate, who has introduced a new element of toughness into the peace talks since he took over in September, demanded an explanation on behalf of the families.

"You are making a tremendous mistake," he said, "if you think that silence on this subject will assist you in any way. I tell you that it will harm you in every way if you maintain this unbelievable standard of conduct."

Mr. Porter received no explanation and afterward, when reporters asked Hanoi's spokesman, Nguyen Than Le, about the charge, he said only that the prisoners were being treated in a "humanitarian" way. Mr. Le did not deny Mr. Porter's assertion that only 170 letters were received from American prisoners from May to October compared with 1,300 in the same six-month period last year.

The 1,300 were sent by almost all of the 339 prisoners that North Vietnam has officially listed. The 170 letters this year were sent by fewer than 50 of them, according to the American side.

Previous Sessions Reviewed

Earlier Mr. Porter reviewed the 134 previous plenary sessions. The various peace points presented by the Communist side, he said, "now add up to 37, but their importance to date is zero because you are not permitted to explain or defend them and it is and will remain beyond your power to impose them."

Mr. Porter ended with what he called "a final thought."



Associated Press

William J. Porter, chief U.S. delegate, talking to reporters in Paris outside the International Conference Center.

He said that in view of the record "you should congratulate yourselves that we are still here listening."

Nguyen Minh Vy, who represented North Vietnam, emerged from the conference hall to say that Mr. Porter had delivered one of the longest statements on record from the American side but that its importance was "zero."

Both Hanoi and the Vietcong held to their position that the United States must agree to withdraw all its troops be-

fore the American prisoners could be released. Stephen Ledogar, the American press spokesman, said it was the only music they were allowed to play and that it was getting boring.

"It has become increasingly futile to try to talk to these clowns outside the meeting hall or inside the meeting hall," he said.

He refused, however, to interpret Mr. Porter's remarks as a warning that the United States might leave the talks.