

Hanoi Hardens Terms For Release of POWs

HONG KONG (AP) — North Vietnam appeared today to harden its terms for the release of U.S. prisoners.

Hanoi said the United States must abandon its policy of Vietnamizing the war.

An end to Vietnamization has always been implicit among Communist demands for a final solution in Vietnam. But this is the first time it has linked it with the prisoner issue.

Previously, the Communists at the Paris peace talks had linked a timetable for a U.S. forces withdrawal to the overthrow of President Nguyen Van Thieu of South Vietnam.

An end to Vietnamization, the process of training South Vietnamese forces so South Vietnam can defend itself, would, at this stage probably mean the fall of Thieu. President Nixon repeatedly has emphasized the importance of Vietnamization to his withdrawal plans.

The Hanoi broadcast said an end to Vietnamization and U.S. forces withdrawal were "important and significant links" in the peace plan submitted by the Viet Cong at the Paris peace talks last July.

The Viet Cong plan did not directly speak of Vietnamization but said Vietnam must be allowed to work out its own destiny without outside interference.

Radio Hanoi, in a Vietnamese-language broadcast, said the "only way for (President) Nixon to get the U.S. prisoners of war back to their families is to follow "two basic points:

"1. Completely end the war of aggression in Vietnam and withdraw all its troops from Vietnam, and

"2. Completely end the Vietnamization policy of continuing the war."

THE BROADCAST said the Vietna-

mization policy was a "plot to withdraw U.S. troops but still continue the war of American aggression by puppet forces under U.S. direction and with U.S. support and supplies."

Reiterating that the Vietnamization program is a continuation of the U.S. war, Radio Hanoi continued:

"Once again we directly tell Nixon that as long as the U.S. still stubbornly prolongs the war, the more U.S. troops will continue to die in vain and the longer the men caught redhanded while creating crimes will be kept from reuniting with their families.

"WHETHER THE U.S. prisoners of war can go home or not depends entirely on the policy of Nixon, whether he wants to end the war of aggression in Vietnam or not end it."

Radio Hanoi termed its broadcast a "commentary answering the lies and falsehoods voiced by Nixon" in his television interview Sunday.

Secretary of State William P. Rogers told newsmen yesterday U.S. negotiators at the Paris peace talks have raised the issue of releasing American prisoners of war, but the North Vietnamese have always "insisted on it being discussed in a political context."

Rogers, interviewed by ABC News, said the North Vietnamese consistently have refused to discuss a POW release as a separate item.

Sen. George McGovern, D-S. D., and Rep. Robert L. Leggett, D-Calif., both of whom talked with the North Vietnamese in Paris last year, had challenged a statement by President Nixon that the enemy had rejected a release of POWs in exchange for a U.S. troop withdrawal deadline.