

Anti-Nixon Rally By Kin of POWs

Washington

Relatives of American prisoners of war, rallying outside the capitol yesterday as President Nixon delivered his State of the Union speech, blamed him for their men's captivity and called for his defeat in November.

"It is my opinion that the administration is holding my son, not the so-called enemy," said Jane Dudley, whose son, Air Force Major George McKnight of Honolulu, is a POW in North Vietnam.

"Since the President has decided to forget us, the only thing to do is to get him out of office," Sheila Cronin of the Washington area said. Her brother, Navy Lieutenant Commander Michael Cronin, is a prisoner in Hanoi.

"He is now blaming the war on prisoners," said Mrs. Gerald Gartley of Dunedin, Fla., whose Navy lieutenant son, Gerald Jr., is captive in North Vietnam. "I don't

think the prisoners deserve this. I don't think the families deserve it."

The group of POW relatives, clergymen and anti-war sympathizers, which swelled at times up to 500, rallied at a nearby church and marched two blocks to wait outside the capitol as Mr. Nixon spoke.

Stopped by police at the edge of the capitol grounds, they stood in occasional rain, speaking, singing and listening to Mr. Nixon on portable radios. When Mr. Nixon was gone, they were allowed on the capitol steps, where they were greeted by a number of congressmen.

"I came here hoping the President would say he is ready to negotiate and end the war," Mrs. Gartley said. "I was terribly disappointed and really shocked that in his State of the Union message the President felt that this was of such little significance to the people of the United States."

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