

# U.S. 'Won't Let Saigon' Block POW Camp Probes

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## Washington

A State Department official testified yesterday that in the future the administration will not allow the Saigon government to block neutral inspection of prisoner of war camps in North Vietnam.

But the official upset relatives of service men when he said that many men missing in action in Indochina "are almost certainly dead."

## SON

"He's just written off my son," said Mrs. Donald Shay, Linthicum, Md., following the testimony of William H. Sullivan, deputy assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific affairs. He was testifying before a House Foreign Affairs subcommittee studying the POW problem.

In his statement, Sullivan criticized North Vietnam for failure to provide information about men it does not list as prisoners but whom the United States is certain Hanoi knows something about.

"We recognize, of course, that many of the men listed as missing in Indochina are almost certainly dead," Sullivan said.

Sullivan said that in the absence of evidence to the contrary, the United States has generally accepted Hanoi's declarations that a spe-

cific American serviceman is dead, although it will not officially change his status until there is formal verification under rules of the Geneva Convention.

## CHARGE

Under questioning by Representative Clement J. Zablocki (Dem-Wis.), Sullivan offered the first public State Department comment on a congressman's charge that the South Vietnamese scuttled an attempt by a private group, Amnesty International, to inspect North Vietnamese camps holding Communist captives.

Representative Les Aspin (Dem-Wis.), had charged Wednesday that the Adminis-

tration "sat and did nothing" in June when Saigon backed out of the tentative arrangement on grounds its prison authorities would be too busy with a planned repatriation of 600 North Vietnamese POWs to see Amnesty International inspectors.

Sullivan said South Vietnam merely wanted to postpone the reciprocal inspections. But he said Washington would not tolerate any action that would allow another possibility to evaporate.

"If North Vietnam would

permit Amnesty International to inspect prison camps," said Sullivan, "we would not only welcome it but we would use whatever influence we had to encourage South Vietnam to allow them to visit theirs."

Amnesty International, a non-governmental organization representing a wide variety of ideological views, is primarily concerned with the welfare of civilians imprisoned for political reasons. The organization said it was approached initially by South Vietnam and secured permission from North Vietnam to visit camps there.

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