

POW 'Statement' Assails Bombing, Hanoi Claims

Paris

North Vietnamese representatives at the Paris talks last night distributed a statement allegedly signed by eight captive U.S. pilots describing the bombing of North Vietnam as "futile."

The statement contained in a North Vietnamese news agency dispatch received here, said the bombing would only lead to the "death and capture of many more Americans, as well as endangering the lives of those already there."

It called on Americans to demand an end to the Vietnam war and the resumption of the peace negotiations in Paris.

The statement, distributed by North Vietnam's delegation to the stalled peace talks, was allegedly signed by Commander Walter E. Wilber, Lieutenant Com-

mander David W. Hoffman, Captain Kenneth J. Fraser, Captain Lynn E. Guenther, Lieutenant Colonel Edison W. Miller, Captain James D. Cutler, Lieutenant Norris A. Charles and Captain Edwin A. Hawley.

It was addressed: "To the people of the United States and the Congress of the U.S. from a group of pilots captured in the Democratic Republic of North Vietnam (DRVN)."

"Despite a bombing halt announced in 1968, the President ordered the resumption and authorized the continuation of the bombing of the DRVN with a variety of excuses to justify the raids," the statement said.

"We, the detained Americans in Hanoi, could not help but be struck by the futility of such action."

The statement said that the "peace of Hanoi and

Haiphong was shattered by American aircraft and bombs," on April 16.

"Many innocent people died a totally needless and senseless death," it said.

"No bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong will cause the Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG) of the Republic of South Vietnam and the DRVN to come begging for peace," it added.

The pilots said that they had "come to know the Vietnamese people, and we know that no bombing or threat of death is going to still the spirit that lives in their hearts."

The Vietnamese would not settle for a peace "short of freedom and independence," they said.

The statement appealed to Americans to "exercise your rights and responsibilities, and demand an end to the war now."

Reuters