

POWs as Pawns Of Vietnam Reds

HANOI HAS DUSTED OFF the most heartless propaganda stunt in its seemingly endless repertoire. Allegedly for humanitarian reasons, it is about to release three American prisoners of war — repeating similar releases of six men on two occasions in 1968, and three more men in 1969.

As welcome as the news certainly was to the prisoners and their loved ones, it remains a cruel hoax. The idea is to embarrass President Nixon just before the November election by raising hopes among other POW families that their men also could be freed by more defeatist cooperation with the enemy.

There is nothing humanitarian whatsoever in the pending new releases. The three airmen picked for the latest propaganda stunt have either previously assailed this nation's war policies in controlled interviews or have wives who are active in the anti-war movement.

It is highly doubtful, therefore, that the trio slated to come home will have anything but kind words to say about Hanoi and unkind words about the Nixon administration. Which is the whole enemy idea.

You can be almost positive that there will be no repetition of what happened in 1969, when Navy Lt. Robert Frishman was freed and subsequently denounced the North Vietnamese for what he said was their dreadful treatment of prisoners.

FURTHER ASSURING SUCCESS for the enemy's latest propaganda ploy is the American agency claiming credit for the forthcoming releases — self-dubbed the Committee of Liaison with the Families of Servicemen Detained in North Vietnam.

This outfit, headed by anti-war activists David Dellinger and Cora Weiss, already has "warned" the United States government not to interfere with the activities of the three prisoners when they are released.

Any attempt to do so, Dellinger said, would jeopardize the possibility that Hanoi may release others of the hundreds of prisoners being held. It goes without saying that the possibility of Frishman-type truth telling would also be reduced to nearly zero.

The suggestion has been made that Dellinger's committee be prosecuted for failing to register with the Justice Department as the agent of a foreign power. Why not indeed?