

SF Examiner

SEP 25 1972

# POWs Freed At War End Only -- Hanoi

By Peter Arnett

HANOI — (AP) — North Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Van Dong reasserted yesterday to a delegation of Americans in Hanoi to escort home three released fliers that remaining pilots in captivity will be freed only when an agreement is reached to settle the war.

In a 90-minute informal discussion attended by this reporter, Dong told anti-war activists Cora Weiss, David Dellinger, the Rev. William Sloane Coffin and Prof. Richard Falk that a framework for negotiating a settlement to the war has long been available.

That was the seven-point proposal put forward by the Provisional Revolutionary Government, the Viet Cong, that calls for the total withdrawal of American forces and the formation of a coalition government.

Dong said he wanted to stress the importance of the Sept. 11 clarification statement put forward in Paris by the Viet Cong delegation head, Madame Nguyen Thi Binh, on a three-party coalition government for South Vietnam.

President Nguyen Van Thieu of South Vietnam would be excluded under this formula, but Saigon would be allowed to name anyone else to one-third of the government, the Viet Cong another third. The final third would be comprised of Catholics, Buddhists, exiled South Vietnamese in Paris and others.

The greying, wiry North Vietnamese leader told the delegation that the fliers should be released and that it would be a good act.

He asserted that President Nixon was aware of the necessity for a settlement first

before their freedom and that there was no misunderstanding.

## Response

The premier said he felt that despite this Nixon is following a policy that delivered pilots into North Vietnamese hands and the number was increasing.

Dong insisted that North Vietnam wants to release all captured Americans and that moment would come when there was positive response to the proposals already tabled for a settlement.

Mrs. Weiss, cochairman of the committee of liaison with the families of the servicemen detained in North Vietnam, told this reporter yesterday that the prospect of a meeting with the premier was one reason for the delay in leaving Hanoi for the United States with the three released pilots.

Another reason for the delay, she said, was that the delegation had a responsibility to make contact with other pilots still detained.

Meanwhile the three American pilots released from North Vietnamese prison camps messaged President Nixon assuring him of their good health and of their intention to return all the way home with their civilian escorts.

## Waiting

The message dispatched last night by international cable was signed by Air Force Maj. Edward Elias, Navy Lt. (j.g.) Mark Gartley and Navy Lt. (j.g.) Norris Charles.

In a long discussion on the war, Dong referred to Americans who thought they could have defeated North Vietnam with armaments and

politics and who had imagined for years that the Hanoi government would not survive. Those people are still waiting for the end just as they waited in 1964-68, he said.

The premier admitted that much of his country is devastated and that his people have had to make many sacrifices, but he said their minds are lucid and hearts proud, they know the reasons to fight and that to win

the war means winning peace, independence and freedom.

## Hostage

Despite the war the Vietnamese still have a great deal of energy and know they are fighting for best of all possible causes, he said.

Some in America thought they could win the war quickly, particularly with the power of computers, Dong said, but he said intelligence and conscience are

more important.

The delegation told Dong that some in the United States believe Vietnam is being brought to its knees by bombing, but — "my people do not kneel down."

A delegation member brought up offers by some Americans peace activists to serve as hostages against U.S. bombing and to interpose their bodies between bombs and the Vietnamese people.

Dong said it was difficult to comment because the nature of those people was obviously from their hearts. His people could only show respect and admiration but as a people who were realistic they had to give serious thought to those proposals.

His own personal view was that the battlefield for those in America who opposed war is in America and that the battlefield for his people is in Vietnam.



**FREE POW'S MOTHER IN CAVE SHELTER**  
Mrs. Minnie Lee Gartley saw raiding U.S. planes



**AS AMERICAN AIRCRAFT WERE STRIKING, 80 MILES SOUTH OF HANOI**  
POW's relatives Mrs. Olga Charles (left) and Mrs. Minnie Lee Gartley con-

—AP Photos