

Announcer: .....And one last story from Southeast Asia, Here's Peter Truscier of the Asia Information Group:

Truscier: On Saturday, South Vietnam's Liberation Press Agency broadcast the full text of a letter addressed to the United States people and Congress, and signed by 14 POWs now being held in South Vietnam, one of them a civilian and the other 13 U.S. Army men. The letter said in part: "The totality of this camp is united in the common cause of ending this senseless and useless war. During our captivity we have taken each bit of optimistic news and used it to reassure each other that the war would end within six months, only to have that optimism dashed by empty promises and acts of escalation on the part of the President. We have been used by President Nixon in this heartbreaking game for four years." The letter went on:

"Our leaders have given us a variety of reasons for our involvement in Vietnam. Most recently President Nixon has told the people that we remain in South Vietnam for the sake of prisoners of war and to protect the remaining American forces. This latest reason given by the President is the most aggravating for us because we are personally involved. The Provisional Revolutionary Government has stated that if the United States government withdraws all American troops from South Vietnam and gives up Nguyen Van Thieu in Saigon, prisoners of war will be returned home. Does it not stand logically that if there are no American lives in South Vietnam, no one will have to protect them?

"We do not fear death at the hands of the Vietnamese. However, many of us have been in areas that have received direct hits by B52s, tactical air strikes, helicopters and artillery. President Nixon may convince the American people that an increase in bombing will get the prisoners home, but he will never convince us." The letter concluded by saying:

"We appeal to you, the American people, to become aware of the true nature of the Vietnam issue. We appeal to our elected representatives to take sufficient action to expedite a solution to the entire Vietnam problem. In this trying time, we can only hope that your ideals, your conscience and your love of our country will guide you to a just and lasting solution." The letter was signed by: Raymond P. Schrupp, Robert M. Young, John G. Dunn, Daniel F. Maslovsky, James H. Hestain, Bobby L. Johnson, Felix Necoquinones, Gary J. Guggenberger, Richard H. Springman, Frederick H. Krausen, Ferdinand Rodriguez, Richard G. Waldhaus, John A. Young, and Robert P. Chenoweth.

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