

Elias Feels Governments, Not Groups, Should Arrange P.O.W. Releases

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Special to The New York Times
 MONTGOMERY, Ala., Oct. 4
 —Maj. Edward K. Elias of the Air Force, one of the three United States prisoners of war recently returned from North Vietnam, said today that he had "a strong feeling" that prisoner-release negotiations "should be conducted from government to government and not between a diverse bunch of individuals."
 He dismissed with sarcasm the contention of Cora Weiss, one of the antiwar activists

who went to Hanoi to escort the prisoners back to the United States, that he had been "recaptured" by the Air Force.
 Major Elias spoke at a news conference at Maxwell Air Force Base, where he has been undergoing medical tests. His wife, Georgia, sat beside him.
 The 34-year-old Air Force officer and the two other prisoners—Lieut. Mark L Gartley, 28, and Lieut. (jg.) Norris A. Charles, 27, of the Navy—returned to the United States last

Thursday. Major Elias said that he was reunited at that time with his family, "not recaptured" by the military.
 As for the future, he said that he planned "to be a professional military man for the rest of my life" and that he hoped to fly again, although not on missions in Southeast Asia. He said that he expected no problems of of readjustment, either personally or professionally.
 In response to a question, he

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said that he "would be very honored" if his own son, now three years old, chose the military as a profession.
 He said that he expected to take an active part in "an Air Force plan and program which is now in effect for repatriation of further prisoners of war."
 The major, who was shot down on April 20 while flying a reconnaissance mission over North Vietnam, said that he spent a few days wandering around before he was captured.

He was taken into custody by the North Vietnamese military, he reported, and "was treated humanely" throughout his five months of captivity.
 He said that while "no prison is a bed of roses," he found "the food was adequate, the clothing was adequate."
 "I have thrown food away before," he remarked. "I had clothes I did not wear."
 The major also said that he could hear and see American bombs falling in North Vietnam,

but that he felt no fear because he and fellow prisoners were adequately sheltered.
 He said that he had received only one letter during his confinement, although he later learned that his wife had written him 30.
 Beyond these comments, Major Elias declined to discuss prisoner conditions on the ground that he was kept with a "small group" and did not wish to infer how other prisoners might have been treated.