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Prof. Seeks Repatriation Assurance

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PALO ALTO — An international law professor has asked President Nixon for assurances that there will be no forced repatriation of prisoners at the end of the Vietnam War.

Julius Epstein, professor of international law and diplomatic history at Lincoln University, said yesterday that conversations with Pentagon officials have raised fears such a policy might be considered.

Epstein said he could obtain no reassurance to the contrary from Dr. Henry A. Kissinger and had appealed to the President directly.

Dennis J. Doolin, deputy assistant secretary of defense, had answered for Kissinger, but Epstein said he considered the response as ambiguous and avoiding the issue.

He complained that some 20,000 to 30,000 prisoners are held by South Vietnam and to force them to be returned to the north against their will would be "a crime against humanity."

Doolin said in his letter to Epstein that there are currently more than 37,000 "enemy prisoners of war" including 10,000 North Vietnamese army personnel that are under the jurisdiction of South Vietnamese military authorities.

"The Geneva convention cited above requires the repatriation of prisoners of war on both sides of the conflict at the conclusion of hostilities. The United States government intends to abide by the provisions of this convention," Doolin wrote.