

# Navy POW Tells How He Took Anti-War Stand

New York

A Navy captain said yesterday that during nearly five years as a POW he was never tortured and anti-war statements he made over Radio Hanoi were made purely out of conscience.

Captain Walter Wilbur, a fighter squadron commander shot down over North Vietnam in June, 1968, said on the CBS "60 Minutes" that his first 20 months of imprisonment were spent in solitary confinement.

But after that period, he said, he was never mistreated and was "not physically beaten or handled" as some returning prisoners have charged they were.

Listening to a playback of a speech he made over Radio Hanoi urging an early end to the war, Wilbur denied he made the statement to get better treatment.

"I am very sincere right now — I was very sincere then," he said. "Many people had exactly the same experience that I did."

Wilbur said, however, he did not question the honesty of those POWs who have told in recent days of mistreatment.

Wilbur said his change of mind about the war began while he was in solitary.

"I am a Christian," he said. "I love my wife and children. I love my country very much. I found out my conscience bothered me very much."

"The war in Vietnam was



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CAPTAIN WILBUR  
'I am very sincere'

very controversial. It had gone on for 18 years or longer. More than one generation of Americans had fought in it. I had seen an ex-vice president, Hubert Humphrey, change his mind. I had seen a former secretary of defense, Clark Clifford, change his mind."

Wilbur added he was in-

spired by "the voices of so many prominent people" speaking against the war, like Senators George McGovern and Edward Kennedy, as well as tapes of the late Dr. Martin Luther King, and felt that "such a spirit will overcome any obstacles."

"I was always for peace," he said. "I felt if we were going to wind it down — why don't we stop it now?"

Asked how his fellow prisoners reacted to his making the anti-war statements, Wilbur replied that "some concurred ... some said we're with you but don't include me ... some were, of course, disgusted."

Asked about reports that prisoners who made statements used by the North Vietnamese for propaganda purposes might be court-martialed or ostracized by fellow officers, Wilbur said he thought Americans should now "concentrate on ... the longer view," and try to find out why they got into the longest war in their history. *Associated Press*