

All Missing U.S. Troops Seen Dead

By Dusko Doder

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The administration's top official on prisoners of war affairs said yesterday that there are more than 1,400 Americans listed as missing in Indochina but that there is no clear evidence that any of them are still alive. However, he raised the possibility that some "Western" POWs in Cambodia may be alive.

Frank Sieverts, special assistant to Deputy Secretary of State Kenneth Rush, said that each of the 588 American POWs released by North Vietnamese and Laotian Communists "was carefully debriefed for any information" on other POWs.

"There is no indication from these debriefings that any American personnel continue to be held in Indochina. All American prisoners known to any of our returned POWs have either been released or been listed by the Communist authorities as having died in captivity," Sieverts said.

Sieverts, testifying before the National Security Policy and Scientific Developments Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said U.S. officials were in "direct contact" with Communist authorities in North Vietnam and Laos in an effort to account for missing personnel.

While citing official assurances that "no American prisoners are held in Cambodia," Sieverts noted reports "that there continue to be prisoners detained in Cambodia."

"Although there has been no confirmation of these reports from the Communist side, they suggest the possibility that some Western personnel continue to be held in the country," he said.

Sieverts said that "our aim is to find the fullest possible information on each missing man" and expressed the hope that Communist authorities in Indochina would cooperate with officials of the Joint Casualty Resolution Center, a Thailand-based unit staffed by Americans and seeking independent information on American missing and dead.

"We recognized this is an enormous undertaking and that we cannot succeed in every case, or even in the majority of cases," Sieverts said. "But we intend to try."

Sieverts said that Henry Kissinger, President Nixon's national security adviser, discussed the question of Americans missing in action during his meeting with Hanoi's Le Duc Tho in Paris last week. According to Sieverts, the Hanoi official promised "a great degree of cooperation" in the American effort.