

Pentagon Unit to Review Advice for Future POWs

Washington

A high-level Pentagon committee will soon begin a major study that could result in giving U.S. servicemen clearer guidance on how to act as prisoners of war in any future conflict.

The review foreshadows the first revamping of the military Code of Conduct since it was first drawn in 1955, two years after the Korean war when some U.S. servicemen allegedly went over to the enemy in North Korean prisons.

The new review has been

urged by senior U.S. prisoners of war since they were freed from North Vietnam last winter and spring.

Basically, these former POWs have told military and civilian authorities that better guidelines are needed on how far American servicemen may go in giving enemy captors more than name, rank, service number and date of birth.

Many of the returned POWs acknowledged making propaganda statements but said they did so only after being beaten and tortured.

Debate on the value of the code has been in progress among U.S. military men and civilian officials since the last of 566 U.S. war prisoners were freed by the North Vietnamese last March.

Some have argued the code should be abolished unless it is strengthened and given teeth.

On the other side, there are both military men and civilian officials who believe the code worked, in its present form.

Associated Press