

Kin of Missing in Action Vent Distress to Senators

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 28— Families of Americans missing in Indochina vented their frustration, before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee today, complaining that the Government had failed to do enough to press Hanoi into providing information on the 1,300 men still unaccounted for.

About 400 parents, wives and children crowded into the committee's small hearing room, applauding loudly when a witness or a Senator made a point critical of the way the issue of the men missing in action has been handled.

"Our problem has been Watergated, Agnewed, Richard-soned, energy-crisised and Mideasted practically out of existence," said Mrs. Maureen Dunn, acting national coordinator of the National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia.

Decline in Membership

Mrs. Dunn, other witnesses and several Senators complained that the American public had tired of the prisoner-of-war issue, and that the press was no longer paying much attention to the fact that, despite the Vietnam peace agreement, North Vietnam has not given any of the promised information on Americans listed as missing.

Scott Albright, the executive director of the league, said that a year ago, when the peace agreement was signed, the organization had more than 3,000 members. But now, he said, "We have only little more than half that number remaining."

"Some of those whose husbands or sons were set free have become inactive," Mr. Albright said. "But hundreds of others have dropped out of the organization out of a growing despair that nothing is being done or will be done to resolve the status of their loved ones."

"Those who remain are essentially the hard-core in-fighters — the wives, parents and other close relatives and friends — who are determined that every effort must be made to see that our missing men are properly accounted for."

Kissinger Was Invited

Senator J. W. Fulbright, Democrat of Arkansas, the committee's chairman, said that Secretary of State Kissinger and Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger had been invited to testify at the one-day session—the first held by the committee on the question of the missing men—but that they had sent deputies.

Most of the discussion today was generalized, with both witnesses from the league and two Administration spokesmen expressing frustration at the failure so far to prod Hanoi into providing definite information on the men who have been listed for years as missing in action in Indochina.

The most specific suggestions came from E. C. Mills, a director of the league, who proposed a three-point plan: a worldwide campaign to focus attention on the issue; a refusal to grant any reconstruction aid to Hanoi until the information is provided, and a ban on better tariff treatment for the Soviet Union unless Moscow puts pressure on the North Vietnamese.

The Russian trade issue has already been linked to free emigration of Soviet Jews. Mr. Mills said it should also be attached to the issue of the missing men because of Soviet military aid to Hanoi.

Frank A. Sieverts, the State Department prisoner specialist, said that the Administration had no problem with the first two of Mr. Mills's proposals but that he had reservations about the trade matter.

Mr. Sievert, said the Administration shared the anguish of the families and was doing all it could to get Hanoi's compliance with Article 8-B of the Vietnam accord.

Provisions of Article

That article said the parties to the accord "shall help each other to get information" on military and civilian personnel missing in action and to find the graves of the dead "so as to facilitate the exhumation and repatriation of the remains."

Mr. Sieverts and Roger E. Shields of the Pentagon both charged Hanoi with failure to live up to Article 8-B.

When the United States raises the issue of the missing at the four-power meetings in Saigon, Hanoi and the Vietcong usually reply that this issue should be settled at the same time as all other outstanding questions.

The Communists have specifically alleged South Vietnamese cease-fire violations, American reconnaissance flights over North Vietnam, insufficient release of Communist prisoners held by Saigon and other South Vietnamese and American violations of the agreement.

Before the Vietnam agreement, the United States listed 1,925 military men and 55 civilians as captured or missing in Indochina.