



Associated Press

A South Vietnamese soldier leading handcuffed prisoners of war to an Air America plane for transportation from a fighting area. Air America is financed by the C.I.A.

U.S. Admits C.I.A. Plane Carried P.O.W.'s in Vietnam

SAIGON, South Vietnam, May 2 (AP)—The United States Ambassador, Graham A. Martin, said today that the airline of the Central Intelligence Agency had been used to transport North Vietnamese prisoners, but he denied that this represented a violation of the cease-fire terms.

The North Vietnamese and Vietcong have repeatedly charged that the United States is violating the cease-fire agreement by assigning American civilians for military-related operations, for intelligence gathering and to advise and give technical assistance to the Saigon Government.

Mr. Martin said he had authorized the use of an Air

America plane for "humanitarian reasons" after a request for help to transport a wounded prisoner. He said he had not known that six other prisoners of war would be put on the plane.

The Ambassador's acknowledgement came after Associated Press photographs, taken Tuesday in the Mekong Delta, showed seven North Vietnamese being led aboard an Air America plane in an apparent violation of the cease-fire. One of the prisoners was wounded in the leg but walked unaided.

Observers noted, however, that the photographs also documented a violation by Hanoi—the presence of North Vietnamese troops in the South—that the Communists have consistently denied.

Asked how many times Air America had been used for humanitarian missions, Mr. Martin replied: "I'm not sure."

The C.I.A.-financed Air America is under contract to the four-nation International Commission of Control and Supervision and is used by the United States Embassy for travel in Indochina.

Washington Defend Action

WASHINGTON, May 2 (AP)—The State Department today defended the use of an Air America plane to transport "a wounded person" in Vietnam. "It was motivated by humanitarian considerations," a press officer, Paul Hare said at a news conference.