

Hanoi Letter on The MIA Issue

Washington

Senator Edward M. Kennedy (Dem-Mass.) yesterday made public a letter from a North Vietnamese official saying his government is continuing to seek information on Americans missing in action but a "good solution" hinges on an end to U.S. involvement in Indochina.

The White House promptly accused Hanoi of inhumanity and a violation of the Paris peace accords.

North Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Duy Trinh said in a letter dated January 21 that he hopes his government's efforts would help in "easing the anguish of the families of those still considered missing."

Kennedy had written to Trinh expressing concern over problems in implementing the Paris peace accord and in accounting for those Americans listed as missing in action as well as an international group of journalists still missing in Cambodia.

"In the present juncture," responded Trinh, "what is most imperative, just and humane is to check the pouring of U.S. military aid to South Vietnam . . . this will have a positive effect to ensure a strict implementation of all the provisions of the Paris agreement on Vietnam, including Article 8 (b) concern for the families of missing."

White House Press Secretary Ron Nessen told reporters the letter "shows an appalling lack of humanitarian concern for the families of men who are missing."

He added that "under the Paris accords, they are supposed to turn over any such

information and allow U.S. inspection teams to go to the site" of any reported finding of missing U.S. servicemen.

He stressed that "the United States has no hard evidence that any men are alive and the letter offers none." And said if Hanoi has information on missing Americans "they ought to give it to us and not dangle it" as a conditional offer.

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