

38 Statement on the Return of the First Group of American Prisoners of War From Southeast Asia.

February 11, 1973

AS THE first group of Americans held as prisoners of war in Vietnam arrives home, the whole Nation would like to be there to welcome them back to the country they have served so well.

Let us remember, however, that this moment belongs above all to the returning men themselves and to the families waiting to welcome them. We can join most fittingly in that welcome not with fanfare, but with quiet respect for their fortitude in the ordeal that is now ending and for their privacy in the time ahead.

On the Veterans Administration Building in Washington are the words of Abraham Lincoln, whose birthday we are about

to observe, reminding us of our obligation "to care for him who shall have borne the battle." Let us mark this special Sunday with a prayer of thanks for all who have borne this battle—and have made peace with honor possible. And let us resolve anew to be worthy of the sacrifices they have made.

NOTE: The statement was released at San Clemente, Calif.

On February 14, 1973, the President met with Adm. Thomas H. Moorer, USN, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in the President's office in the Executive Office Building, to ask for recommendations on job opportunities for returning prisoners of war in the context of the long-range Jobs for Veterans program.