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Hanoi May Release P.O.W.'s Saturday

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SAIGON, South Vietnam, Wednesday, Feb. 7—The first United States prisoners of war may be released on Saturday in Hanoi, the chairman of the International Commission of Control and Supervision said yesterday.

Michael Gauvin, the chief Canadian delegate to the commission and its chairman for this month, said that while no definite date had been fixed for the first exchange of prisoners, to the best of his knowledge "it could be about Feb. 10."

Speaking to newsmen after yesterday's commission session, Mr. Gauvin added that other prisoners, possibly South Vietnamese, might be released shortly after somewhere near Saigon. Mr. Gauvin mentioned as likely sites both An Loc, the devastated and besieged provincial capital 55 miles north of the capital, and Phu Hoa, a small district town heavily infiltrated by Vietcong about 15 miles northwest of Saigon.

Details Awaited

American officials said that the Communists had not yet announced a definite time or location for the first release of American prisoners, though one official said he believed it might come as early as tomorrow.

"Right now it is a matter of arranging the practical procedures," one well-informed American official remarked. But "when the Communists do decide, they have shown they can move very fast," he said.

In preparation for the re-

lease, three teams of prisoner-exchange observers from the International Commission of Control and Supervision were placed on two-hour standby alert yesterday, commission officials said.

The teams, which are provided for in the Paris agreement on ending the war, were made up of two men from each of the four nations that compose the commission—Canada, Hungary, Indonesia and Poland. A Canadian official said that the observer teams would be on standby again today.

There were also these developments yesterday in the effort to set up peace-keeping machinery and monitor the cease-fire:

Twenty-two Vietcong members of the Four-Party Joint Military Commission were flown by American helicopters to join the military commission's regional inspection teams. On Monday 273 North Vietnamese members of the seven regional inspection teams went out, joining the American and South Vietnamese members who were already in place. There were no reports, however, that the teams had actually begun to supervise the cease-fire.

The seven regional inspection teams of the international supervisory group that were sent out Monday continued to work on setting up their offices yesterday, and some of them reportedly fanned into the coun-

tryside to check on the 26 sites that they will use for their sub-regional or local inspection teams. The local teams, according to the Paris agreement, are to be operating by next Monday.

One group of 12 supervisory commission representatives, three from each of the four countries, was stopped by North Vietnamese artillery fire when it tried to go to the city of Quang Tri yesterday to inspect the facilities there for its local team. Reports from the field said that the team had to halt at the district town of Hai Lang, six miles south of Quang Tri, when an artillery barrage blocked the road.

The military commission's subcommission on captured personnel met again yesterday, a United States Embassy spokesman said, apparently to work out the details for prisoner exchanges.

American officials denied a report that the release of United States prisoners had been held up by the failure of the American command to present its detailed plans for withdrawal of United States forces to the joint military commission. The officials said that Maj. Gen. Gilbert H. Woodward, the chief American delegate to the military commission, had provided the withdrawal plans last week as specified under the Paris accord.