

SUNDAY RELEASE OF G.I.'S EXPECTED

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Pentagon Sources Informed
That 27 P.O.W.'s Will Be
Freed by the Vietcong
NYTimes

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON, Feb. 7—Pentagon sources said today that Communist forces plan to release 27 American prisoners of war Sunday from jungle camps in South Vietnam. *VI FEB*

These men, among more than 500 held by the Communists, will be set free near An Loc, a provincial capital in the Central Highlands of South Vietnam, the sources said.

The Pentagon sources said there was still no word on when the first prisoners of war would be released by North Vietnam. Henry A. Kissinger, the chief American negotiator in the Paris peace talks, is scheduled to arrive Saturday in the North Vietnamese capital for four days of talks. Mr. Kissinger left Washington today.

Word From Vietcong

Although the Pentagon had no official comment on the report of the first prisoners to be released, reliable sources said this was the understanding as relayed by the Vietcong to American officials in South Vietnam.

Once released by the Vietcong, the prisoners will be picked up by helicopter and flown directly to Saigon, transferred to specially equipped medical evacuation jets and flown to Clark Air Base in the Philippines.

There the men will be given medical examinations and intelligence debriefings before they are flown to one of 31 hospitals in the United States.

Of the 562 United States servicemen identified by the Communists as prisoners of

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war, 456 are held in the North, seven in Laos and 99 in South Vietnam.

An Loc was one of several areas in the South designated by the Communists as release points for Americans held by the Vietcong. Those held in the North and Laos are to be released in Hanoi.

P.O.W. Release Defended

By SYLVAN FOX

Special to The New York Times

SAIGON, South Vietnam, Feb. 7—An official spokesman denied today that the Saigon Government had violated the Vietnam cease-fire agreement by releasing thousands of military and civilian prisoners after the accord went into effect.

The spokesman, Pham Duong Hien, called the report of the release of the prisoners and the apparent violation of the peace terms "inaccurate and false."

Mr. Hien said that the decision to release the prisoners was made by President Nguyen Van Thieu on Jan. 25—two days before the Paris agreement was signed—and therefore did not constitute a violation of the peace terms.

Some Freed After Truce

Mr. Hien said in response to a question that while the decision to release the prisoners was made before the agreement was signed in Paris, some of the prisoners actually were released after the cease-fire went into effect. He did not specify how many were released after the cease-fire, saying simply that the release of prisoners occurred "before and after" it.

The report of the release, published in The New York Times yesterday, quoted South Vietnamese sources as having said that thousands of civilian and military prisoners held by Saigon had been set free during the last few days in what appeared to be violation of the terms of the Paris agreement.

Under the terms of the Paris accord, military prisoners are required to be returned to the command in which they served and the disposition of civilian political prisoners is supposed to be worked out by Saigon and the Provisional Revolutionary Government.

Conflicting Estimates

The Times report said there were conflicting estimates of the number of prisoners that had been released. It quoted South Vietnamese sources as

having said that some 20,000 Communist war prisoners and roughly an equal number of civilian political prisoners had been turned loose.

It said that the Government was motivated, in the case of the war-prisoners, by a desire not to return the men to Communist commands and, in the case of civilian prisoners, by a desire, as one source put it, "to get rid of them" rather than go through some formal procedure for releasing them.

Mr. Hien, who is the director of the Saigon Government's public affairs center, which opened today, said a total of 10,600 war prisoners and 380 civilian political prisoners had been freed.

The political prisoners were released, Mr. Hien said, as part of the traditional amnesty for Tet the Lunar New Year.

New Rules Listed

Mr. Hien issued his statement about the Times dispatch at a news conference at which he outlined what he called "new regulations" and "new ground rules" for the foreign press in Saigon.

Mr. Hien warned that those journalists who engage in "un-Vietnamese activity" would be expelled or refused visas to return when they left the country.

He defined "un-Vietnamese activity" as the dissemination of "misleading" or "distorted" reports about South Vietnam.

At the same time, Mr. Hien, who is an aide to Hoang Duc Nha, the commissioner general of state for information, apologized for the obstacles to which foreign newsmen were subjected while attempting to cover the activities of peace-keeping commissions at Tan Son Nhut Air Base.

During the first few days after the cease-fire, several foreign journalists were detained for three to four hours because they entered the sprawling base.

Mr. Hien said these incidents were caused by "lack of coordination" between the Government and the military police officials at the base. He added: "We are going to see to it that such incidents will not happen again."

He said foreign journalists who visited Communist-controlled areas of South Vietnam did so "at their own risk."

South Vietnamese, he said, are prohibited from going into Communist-held areas of the country. Foreign journalists would normally expect to travel into such areas accompanied by Vietnamese interpreters or photographers.