

8 FEB 73

POZUS

WAX POST

Wax Post
Sharp Ground Fighting Renewed

8 Feb. 73

Vietcong Holding 125 Foreign POWs

Post 2/8/73
From News Dispatches

Vietcong Gen. Tran Van Tra said in Saigon Wednesday that the National Liberation Front holds 125 non-Vietnamese civilian and military prisoners of war—some of them Americans.

Tra said a list of all POWs held by the Vietcong—including more than 4,000 South Vietnamese—had been supplied to U.S. and Saigon officials. He said the POWs will be released "within the time limit fixed" in the Paris cease-fire accords.

"We are asking the United States and the Republic of

Vietnam to do the same with our captured and detained civilian and military personnel," he said.

North Vietnam announced after the signing of the Paris accord that 555 Americans were being held in Communist POW camps in the two Vietnams, shattering hopes that many of the more than 1,300 Americans listed as missing in action might turn out to be Communist prisoners.

Tra spoke with newsmen as major ground clashes were reported in South Vietnam for the first time in several days. But despite the upsurge in

fighting, Washington Post correspondent Jonathan C. Randal reported from Paris that Vietcong and Saigon government delegates made further progress Wednesday in procedural talks designed to allow substantive negotiations on South Vietnam's political future to begin soon.

Randal said informed sources suggested substantive talks at the foreign ministers' level might start within three weeks.

U.S. presidential adviser Henry A. Kissinger, meanwhile, left Washington for Bangkok Wednesday on the

first leg of a two-week mission which will take him to Hanoi, Peking and Vientiane.

Lao Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma insisted in an interview Tuesday that his government and the Pathet Lao would agree on a cease-fire by Feb. 15.

Speculation continued that Kissinger might meet in either Hanoi or Peking with ousted Cambodian leader Norodom Sihanouk. The White House has said there are no plans for such a meeting.

In Cambodia, the

See VIETN