

# More Captives Exchanged By Saigon and Communists

1,021 Are Returned in Second Release—  
Government Charges Delays and Says  
the North Refused to Accept 100

NYTimes

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Special to The New York Times

SAIGON, South Vietnam, Wednesday, Feb. 14—The Saigon Government and the Communists exchanged 1,021 more prisoners of war yesterday on a battered metal airstrip in the little town of Loc Ninh, 77 miles north of here.

But Lieut. Col. Le Trung Hien, a government military spokesman, said that the exchange—the second between Saigon and the Communists—was going far more slowly than had been planned and charged the Communists with delaying the process.

In six flights to Loc Ninh yesterday, American C-130 transport planes dropped off 450 Vietcong prisoners and brought back to the South Vietnamese air base at Bien Hoa 571 Government soldiers held captive by the Communists.

In the initial exchange Monday, the Government released 150 Vietcong at Loc Minh and the Communists freed 140 South Vietnamese and 27 Americans.

#### 100 Reported Rejected

The Government also released North Vietnamese soldiers on Monday. But Colonel Hien said this evening that the Communists had refused to accept 100 sick and disabled North Vietnamese that the government had attempted to release in Quangtri, the northernmost province in South Vietnam.

The Government had expected on Monday to free 2,000 Communists and to receive 1,020 of its own men.

But the Communists in the Government prisoner-of-war camp at Bien Hoa, 20 miles north of Saigon, had unexpectedly insisted on reassurances that they would be participating in a bonafide release and would not be subjected to new dangers, and the first movement of men started eight hours behind schedule.

Colonel Hien said that the only explanation that North Vietnamese officers in the region had given in refusing to accept 100 prisoners was that they were "not ready" to receive them.

#### Held at Phu Bai

This was contrary, Colonel Hien said, to what the North Vietnamese had told an inspection team from the Four-Party Joint Military Commission just one day earlier. The commission is made up of representatives of the United States, North Vietnam and the Provisional Revolutionary Government.

The Communist prisoners were being held yesterday at a Government military camp at Phu Bai, about 40 miles south of Quan Tri city, and Colonel Hien said the North Vietnamese had given no indication of when they would accept them. The Colonel said that the Government had planned to send a second group of 100 prisoners to the northern region today but that this had been postponed.

Colonel Hien also said that the Communists had promised to free several hundred South Vietnamese prisoners in the Central Highlands but had failed to do so. The Communists in Saigon, he said, had maintained that they had "been unable to make contact with their units in the bush." But he added: "We don't think this is so. We think they are trying to intentionally delay."

Asked why he thought the Communists wanted to delay, Colonel Hien replied angrily, "They do things differently from normal people."

Colonel Hien said that by next Sunday the Government hoped to have returned about 7,000 Communist prisoners, including more than 800 women who had served as soldiers, supply porters and political officials.