

HANOI PULLS OUT SOME TRUCE UNITS

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Teams Withdraw to Saigon From Northern Areas—

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SAIGON, South Vietnam, Saturday, March 3 — The effort to set up peace-keeping machinery in South Vietnam appears to have suffered a setback yesterday when the Communists pulled out their truce delegates from the northern part of the country.

An official American spokesman said that United States Air Force planes flew 156 North Vietnamese and Vietcong members of the Four-Party Joint Military Commission from Hue and Danang back to Saigon yesterday after the Communists had complained about the lack of security for them.

At the same time, however, the North Vietnamese informed the United States delegation to the Joint Military Commission that the next group of 108 prisoners, 106 of them Americans, would be released tomorrow at Gia Lam airport near Hanoi.

The North Vietnamese had provided a list Thursday night of the men to be freed but until late yesterday afternoon the date and place for their release had remained undisclosed. Earlier in the week the Communists had threatened to hold up all further prisoner releases until the Vietnam cease-fire was enforced in a manner more satisfactory to them.

The Vietcong also informed the American delegation yester-

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day that it would release 34 prisoners, including 30 Americans, in Hanoi, but the Vietcong did not specify a time. Informed American officials, who speculated that these prisoners had been captured in the northern provinces of South Vietnam, said they expected that they too would be released tomorrow.

The other foreign captives to be freed are two West Germans, two Thais and two Filipinos.

Despite the progress in the scheduled release of American

prisoners, the efforts to arrange more exchanges of Vietnamese prisoners remained at an impasse, both South Vietnamese and Communist officials reported.

The key obstacles, according to these officials, are the Communist demand that all detained civilians be freed before any more military prisoners are exchanged and the insistence by both sides that the other's list of civilians in custody is far too small.

Lieut. Col. Le Trung Hien, a South Vietnamese military spokesman, said yesterday that the Saigon Government had offered to free all 5,081 civilians it says it holds, provided the Communists would simultaneously release military prisoners and increase the number of civilians they have listed as holding.

The Communists rejected this proposal, the spokesman said.

Colonel Hien added that the Vietcong had reported holding only 200 South Vietnamese civilians, when in fact the Communists had 59,118 civilians in custody. He insisted that this figure was "based on official information." The Vietcong in turn have contended that the Government has over 200,000 civilians in prison.

At a meeting last Thursday of the Subcommittee on Captured Personnel, Colonel Hien reported, the Vietcong announced that they had discovered they held 500 more South Vietnamese military prisoners than they had listed at the beginning of the cease-fire a month ago. That would make a total of 4,785 South Vietnamese soldiers held by the Communists.

Increase Explained

The Communists explained the addition by the difficulty in communicating with the many small prison camps they have scattered around the country, Colonel Hien said. He added that the Communists had not mentioned finding any new American captives.

The withdrawal by the Communists of their military commission teams from the northern part of the country was seen by American officials as only a "temporary affair."

Lieut. Col. Bui Tin, a spokesman for the North Vietnamese delegation to the Joint Military Commission, said in a telephone interview last night that the teams had withdrawn because "the People's Liberation Army felt it has been dishonored and our army and people in North Vietnam are strongly resentful."

Colonel Tin referred to several recent incidents in Hue and Da Nang in which South Vietnamese demonstrators had thrown rocks, injuring North Vietnamese personnel and otherwise disrupting the work of the military commission. The Communist delegates have also repeatedly complained about the poor food and quarters they have been given by the Saigon Government inside heavily guarded military compounds.

American sources said 152 North Vietnamese and four

Vietcong delegates had been flown back to Saigon. They had been stationed at the regional headquarters of the Joint Military Commission at Da Nang and Hue and three subregional sites south of Da Nang.

Their withdrawal is particularly serious because it will make the work of the teams of the International Commission of Control and Supervision virtually impossible. This commission, composed of Canada, Hungary, Indonesia and Poland, has insisted that it can do its job of monitoring the cease-fire only when the Joint Military Commission's teams are in place to guide it.

Colonel Tin, who said that the teams had been withdrawn on direct orders from Hanoi, added that they would be sent back "as soon as their working conditions can be insured."

In a related development, the head of the delegation of the Vietcong's Provisional Revolutionary Government, Lieut. Gen. Tran Van Tra, was flown to Communist headquarters at Loc Ninh yesterday in an American helicopter. United States officials said that General Tra had requested transportation and that he was expected to return on Monday.

Loc Ninh is a small, devastated district town about 70 miles north of Saigon near the Cambodian border. It has been under Communist control since last spring.