

# New POW Dispute Hits Truce Group

## Hanoi Boycott

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SAIGON, March 5—A new impasse developed in Saigon today over the release of Vietnamese prisoners of war.

The North Vietnamese announced this afternoon that they would boycott further meetings of the four-party Joint Military Commission until the South Vietnamese agreed to release Communist POWs in the numbers agreed upon in Paris.

At this morning's meeting of the chiefs of the JMC, the South Vietnamese agreed to release about 2,400 Communist POWs, compared to the 7,000 they released during the first round of exchanges, both Communist and American sources said.

"On this issue, we part company with the government of South Vietnam," an American source said, "and they know it."

When the cease-fire agreement was signed in Paris Jan. 27, the South Vietnamese turned over a list to the Communists of approximately 28,000 POWs under their control and the Vietcong's Provisional Revolutionary Government turned in a list of 4,285 South Vietnamese prisoners.

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The agreement was that all the POWs listed would be returned within 60 days in four roughly equal groups — 15 days apart.

The first exchange went off smoothly, with both sides releasing roughly a quarter of the prisoners on their lists. The South Vietnamese released 7,000 and the Communists released 1,032.

North Vietnamese spokesman Lt. Col. Bui Tin said in a

telephone interview today that a quarter of the South Vietnamese list was the "absolute minimum" the Communists would accept in the second round of exchanges.

He held the Americans partly responsible for the impasse, because "in the talks between Kissinger and Le Duc Tho, the Americans led us to believe that the South Vietnamese understood this," he said.

Tin said that his delegation would return to the four-party meetings when the South Vietnamese agree to release prisoners "in accordance with the agreements made in Paris between Kissinger and Le Duc Tho."

Gen. Gilbert H. Woodward, chief of the American delegation to the four-party talks,

The South Vietnamese have also said that the 1,032 prisoners returned to them in the first round were all captured in 1972. Where, they ask, are all the prisoners captured between 1960 and 1972?

Ironically, the South Vietnamese are having men captured at least half as fast as they are getting them back. More than 500 prisoners have been captured by the Communists since the cease-fire began.

Both sides also disagree on the number of civilian prisoners the other holds, but today's impasse involved military prisoners.

The next scheduled meeting for the chiefs of the JMC is Wednesday, but a special meeting could be called to-

said at the JMC meeting today that the Paris lists should be the basis for prisoner exchanges, and that 25 percent was indeed the figure agreed upon for each of the four exchanges, American sources reported.

The South Vietnamese have been giving varying figures for the number of prisoners they intend to release. The reason, informed sources suggested, is that they hope to get the Communists to add more names to their list.

The South Vietnamese have said that 31,818 of their men are listed as missing. The Communists agreed on Thursday to add 500 names to the 4,285 prisoners they listed in Paris, but the South Vietnamese still insist this is far too low.

morrow if the four sides agree to resume talking.

In another development, the South Vietnamese government announced today that the foreign press would be allowed limited access to the Communist delegations.

Every Saturday morning, a pool of 16 foreign reporters will be transported to Tan Son Nhut air base, where the Communist delegations are quartered, a government spokesman said.

The South Vietnamese would prefer that the 16 names, to be chosen by the Saigon Foreign Correspondents Association, be permanent.

If this is insisted upon, it will bring about an interne-cine struggle among the press here with hundreds of report-

Part of the problem has been that many of the South Vietnamese prisoners were lost in Cambodia and Laos, but the PRG and the North Vietnamese do not admit involvement in these countries and deny any knowledge of POW's there.

The Vietnamese Communists did agree to try to ask the cooperation of their "fraternal brothers in Laos and Cambodia, but so far there have been no results.

The American position is that the South Vietnamese are probably right in saying that the list presented by the Communists in Paris has too few names, but that the list must remain the basis for repatriations if the four exchanges are to take place at all within the specified 60 days.

ers jockeying for a position on the list.

Names will have to be submitted for security clearances, because some reporters have been known to act as messengers for the Communists, the spokesmen said.

The South Vietnamese government has also decided to allow photographers and television crews to film the Communist delegates on their infrequent trips in town. Previously, South Vietnamese police kept all photographers and TV cameras away from the Communist delegates.

The move is seen here as a concession to Communist complaints over their complete isolation—one of the reasons the Communists gave for delaying the release of American prisoners last week.