

Next Release of Americans Set By Communists for Wednesday

NYTimes

SAIGON, South Vietnam, March 11 (AP)—The Communist delegations announced today that they planned to begin releasing the next group of American war prisoners Wednesday in Hanoi.

The North Vietnamese promised to turn over tomorrow a list of those coming out of North Vietnamese prisons. The Vietcong pledged to turn over their list Tuesday.

Together, the lists are expected to contain about 140 names. As they are received in Saigon, the names will be sent to Washington for immediate notification of relatives.

The North Vietnamese said they could release their American prisoners at Hanoi's Gia Lam Airport. But there were conflicting reports about the Americans held by the Vietcong.

Vietcong Plans Not Set

Capt. Phuong Nam, the chief spokesman for the Vietcong delegation, said he was aiming for a release Wednesday, the same day as the North Vietnamese.

But the United States delegation on the Four-Party Joint Military Commission said earlier that the Vietcong indicated that North Vietnam would release its prisoners on one day and the Vietcong the following day, with both releases at Gia Lam Airport. This was the procedure in the last release March 4 and 5.

Neither the North Vietnamese nor the Vietcong said how many United States prisoners they planned to release. But about 140 men are expected to be freed to comply with requirements in the peace agreement that prisoner releases match the rate of United States troop withdrawals.

United States troop strength

was reported today to have dropped to below 7,000, compared with 23,516 at the cease-fire Jan. 28.

The United States command announced that North Vietnam had removed missile equipment at Khe Sanh in the northwestern quarter of South Vietnam. The United States had made it clear that if the missiles were not removed, they could be subject to air attack.

The United States command and the Saigon Government had protested to the Joint Military Commission and the International Commission of Control and Supervision last month, charging that American aerial reconnaissance showed three anti-aircraft missile batteries at the Khe Sanh air strip.

The United States gave North Vietnam an ultimatum to remove the sites and Maj. Gen. Gilbert H. Woodward, head of the United States delegation to the military commission, told the Hanoi delegation that if they were not removed "my Government reserves the right with its allies to take such actions as it deems appropriate."

Rogers Credits Canadians

WASHINGTON, March 11 (Reuters)—Secretary of State William P. Rogers said today that missiles installed by Hanoi at Khe Sanh in apparent violation of the cease-fire had been removed, in part because of the protests of Canadian delegates on the International Commission of Control and Supervision.

Mr. Rogers said on the Columbia Broadcasting System's television program, "Face the Nation," that removal of the missiles proved the effectiveness of the commission.

The chief of the commission's Canadian delegation, Michel Gauvin, had charged

two of the commission's delegations with blocking a probe of the missile installation and had threatened to withdraw from the four-party body. He did not name the delegations but they were presumed to be Poland and Hungary, Indonesia is the other member.



Associated Press

A Vietcong war prisoner being assisted by a medic after being released Saturday by the South Vietnamese Government at An Tin. Saigon released a group of Vietcong and North Vietnamese prisoners in central coast area.