

140 POWs To Be Freed This Week

Associated Press

Saigon

The Viet Cong announced today it will release 32 more prisoners of war to the U.S. on Friday at Hanoi and handed the list of their names to U.S. representatives in Saigon.

The list from the Viet Cong was in addition to 108 captives of North Vietnam whose names were released yesterday. There POWS will be turned over to U.S. authorities tomorrow in Hanoi and flown to Clark Air Base in the Philippines.

A Viet Cong spokesman said its list contained the names of 25 military personnel and seven civilians, all Americans. But a spokesman for the U.S. delegation to the Joint Military Commission said it was informed the Viet Cong would turn over "32 U.S. military personnel and civilians of foreign countries allied with the United States."

The list was radioed to the

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the U.S. lists of 585 American prisoners held in North and South Vietnam and Laos.

The U.S. said it saw no trouble ahead in completing repatriation by the deadline. But it temporarily suspended withdrawal of the fewer than 7000 American troops remaining in Vietnam as insurance that the prisoner release will keep pace with the withdrawal.

Major General Gilbert H. Woodward, senior U.S. representative on the four-party Joint Military Com-

mission, told the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong delegations there will be no further withdrawals until the American prisoners are turned over tomorrow and Friday.

He also said withdrawal of the final 25 per cent of American troops will not begin until the Communist side provides the U.S. delegation with a list of the last group of American POWs and sets a date for their release.

Bui Tin, chief spokesman for the North Vietnamese

delegation, said all the 108 prisoners scheduled for release tomorrow are flyers shot down in late 1967 and 1968, including one civilian whose role in the war effort was not immediately clear. A list of POWs is on page 6.

The State Department identified the lone civilian as Bobby Keese, but gave no additional information on him or his mission. Tin said Keese was shot down in Ha Tinh province in central North Vietnam in September, 1970, but he had no further details.

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Defense Department in Washington so that the families of the POWs could be informed as soon as possible.

The Viet Cong had indicated previously that its transfer would be made on Thursday. But Lieutenant General Tran Van Tra, the senior Viet Cong representative in Saigon, said in a letter to the U.S. delegation it was being postponed because the North Vietnamese government "will be busy welcoming state guests at the Gia Lam airport" on Thursday. He
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did not say who the guests were.

The Viet Cong spokesman said those being released Friday include Major Theodore William Gosta, 34, of Sheridan, Wyo., who he said is suffering from a "nervous illness." He did not elaborate. Gosta was captured Feb. 1, 1968, during the Tet offensive.

Prisoners on the two lists are among 286 American prisoners still held by the Communist side. Their release, which is pegged to U.S. troop withdrawals, will

complete about 75 per cent of the release of American prisoners.

The last group is to be freed by March 28, the deadline set by the Vietnam peace agreement for release of all American prisoners and withdrawal of all U.S. troops.

The Communists have released 299 American prisoners on February 12, February 18 and March 5. When the Vietnam agreement was signed in Paris January 27, the Communist delegations turned over to