

Hanoi to

Free Its

Last POWs

'No Jurisdiction' On 9 in Laos

SAIGON — (AP) — North Vietnam told the United States today it intended to release the last group of American prisoners it holds on Tuesday and Wednesday, but said the U.S. demand that it also release POWs captured in Laos "is beyond the jurisdiction" of the cease-fire agreement.

However, Bui Tin, the chief North Vietnamese delegation spokesman, told newsmen, "The Pathet Lao have assured the United States, through our delegation, that the release will take place."

The United States has suspended withdrawal of American troops from Vietnam until its gets assurance that the prisoners in Laos will be released, and the Communist side has delayed the repatriation of the last POWs pending a resumption of troop withdrawals.

Letter On Releases

A letter from the North Vietnamese delegation to the four-party Joint Military Commission notified the United States of North Vietnam's intent to release 40 U.S. prisoners on Tuesday and 67 on Wednesday, at Hanoi's Gia Lam airport. The North Vietnamese delegation said it would provide the United States with a list of prisoners and other details 48 hours in advance of each release.

A prisoner subcommission of the four-party joint military commission convened a special session this morning in efforts to resolve the issue that already has delayed the release of American POWs by two days. An earlier plan called for the repatriation of American prisoners in Vietnam to be completed by to-

day.

Redeployment

The North Vietnamese letter was signed by its delegation chief, Maj. Gen. Le Quang Hoa. In it, he:

- Said the redeployment of the 825 members of the North Vietnamese delegation to the Joint Military Commission will begin today and be completed on

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Wednesday. The commission, established by the Jan. 27 Paris peace agreement, is set to expire Wednesday.

- Protested the U.S. plan to retain 159 Marine guards attached to the U.S. Embassy staff.

- Requested the U.S. plan for the redeployment of its 825-man delegation to the Joint Military Commission.

Another letter from Lt. Gen. Tran Van Tra, chief of the Viet Cong delegation, de-

manded that the withdrawal of the remaining U.S. troops begin tomorrow and be completed by Wednesday.

Maj. Gen. Gilbert H. Woodward, chief of the U.S. delegation, met one Communist demand by providing a redeployment plan for 5200 American troops, but refused to accept demands that the Marine guard detachment leave.

Deadline

In a letter to Hoa and Tra, Woodward proposed that the United States withdraw 900 tomorrow, 1,800 Tuesday and 2500 on Wednesday — the peace agreement deadline for the completion of U.S. troop withdrawals and repatriation of all American prisoners.

Woodward told the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong that "in order to provide assurances that the redeployment plan can be carried out, the U.S. requires the list of all U.S. POWs held by the Democratic Republic of Vietnam together with the

place and date of release."

"In addition," Woodward said in his letter, "the U.S. requires the place and date of release for the U.S. POWs on the Feb. 1 list provided by the Pathet Lao through the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The release dates for all U.S. POW must be not later than March 28."

Woodward called on North Vietnam to provide the lists by 9 p.m. Saigon time tonight — 5 a.m. PST.

9 in Laos

The list provided by the Pathet Lao contained the names of nine Americans captured in Laos.

"The remaining U.S. Embassy security detachment and defense attache office are appropriate for their functions, as agreed in principle between the United States and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in the course of negotiations leading to the Paris agreement," Woodward said. Plans call for 50 American military men in the defense attache office.