

U.S. BARS PULLOUT UNTIL ALL P.O.W.'S HAVE BEEN FREED

MAR 26 1973

Nixon, in Dispute Over Men Held in Laos, Orders That Troops Stay in Vietnam

DEADLINE IS WEDNESDAY

Americans in Saigon Hopeful of Settlement So Final Group Can Withdraw

NYTimes

By JOHN HERBERS

Special to The New York Times

MIAMI, March 25—President Nixon said today that he had ordered United States forces to stay in South Vietnam until all American prisoners of war have been released.

Mr. Nixon's statement, issued by Ronald L. Ziegler, the White House press secretary, was an attempt to end the deadlock over the release of nine American captives of the Pathet Lao in Laos. In talks in Saigon, the United States has demanded that those prisoners be released along with the 139 remaining prisoners held by the Communists in North Vietnam and South Vietnam.

[United States officials in Saigon said privately that they were confident the dispute would be resolved by Wednesday's deadline for the final pullout of American troops. In a related development, the final exchange of Vietnamese prisoners was interrupted when 210 Communist soldiers held by the South Vietnamese refused to board their aircraft and demanded to stay in the South. Page 4.]

Nixon at Key Biscayne

Mr. Ziegler released the following written statement in Key Biscayne, where Mr. Nixon is spending a long weekend.

"The President has ordered that U. S. forces will remain in Vietnam until all prisoners of

war are released, President Nixon has repeatedly said that as long as U. S. prisoners of war continue to be held in Indochina, the withdrawal of U. S. forces will not be completed.

"The President this morning repeated these instructions to U. S. personnel in Washington and in Saigon: Until all U. S. prisoners of war are released, there will be U. S. forces in Vietnam.

"The deadline for the release is March the 28th, and if this agreed timetable is not met, the other side have failed to live up to the agreement and their commitments and assurances."

'Private Understanding'

Release of the prisoners in Laos was not part of the agreement reached in Paris for ending the Vietnam war and re-

patriating prisoners. But President Nixon and Henry A. Kissinger, his adviser on national security and his negotiator in the Paris agreement, said there was a "private understanding" between Mr. Kissinger and Le Duc Tho, the North Vietnamese negotiator, that the American prisoners in Laos would also be released within the 60 days set for release of prisoners.

The United States had announced temporary suspension of troop withdrawals twice be-

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Associated Press

CHOOSES THE SOUTH: One of 210 prisoners of the South Vietnamese who refused to be turned over to North Vietnam holds sign saying "It is better to die than return to the Communist side." The protest took place at the Bien Hoa air base.

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fore in disputes over the release of American prisoners—on Feb. 28 and March 12.

Moreover, on March 15, President Nixon accused North Vietnam of violating the ceasefire by moving thousands of troops and hundreds of tanks and other armored vehicles down the Ho Chi Minh trail, through Laos into South Vietnam. He suggested that North Vietnam risked resumption of American bombing unless the reported infiltration stopped.

See note attached to story by Sylvan Fox, NYTimes 23 Mar 73.