

CIVILIAN RELEASE DUE IN THE SOUTH

Saigon and Vietcong Agree
—May Free First Today

SAIGON, South Vietnam, April 24 (Reuters)—The South Vietnamese Government and the Vietcong agreed today to begin releasing civilian prisoners to meet the 90-day deadline set by the Paris cease-fire agreement.

The time and place for the exchanges, which are believed likely to begin tomorrow or Thursday, have not been set.

The South Vietnamese delegates to the Joint Military Commission proposed releasing 750 detained Communists at the Vietcong-held town of Loc Ninh, near the Cambodian border north of Saigon. In exchange, the Vietcong delegates said they would free 637 civilian detainees at an as yet unspecified number of towns across South Vietnam.

Both sides claimed responsibility for the prisoner releases, which according to the Paris accords should be resolved by April 28, next Saturday.

The two sides failed to reach agreement on the civilian prisoner issue earlier because of accusations and counter-accusations that each side was holding more prisoners than listed.

The South Vietnamese say the Communists are holding more than 60,000 civilians. The Vietcong's Provisional Revolutionary Government alleges there are hundreds of thousands of political prisoners in government jails.

South Vietnam has given an official list of 5,081 prisoners. The Communist list numbers 637.

A Saigon military spokesman said both sides would continue talks on further civilian prisoners not included in the lists already supplied.

Also today, the Vietcong also rejected a Saigon Government recommendation that the military commission appeal to the North Vietnamese to withdraw their troops from South Vietnam, the Saigon military spokesman said.

The Saigon command reported the second major bomb attack in two days, in which 5 people died and 11 others were wounded.

The explosion took place in a restaurant in the Mekong Delta town of My Tho yesterday.

On Sunday a bomb went off under a makeshift grandstand at an open air variety show in a Roman Catholic hamlet on the central coast. Twelve people were killed and 81 were wounded.

4-Party Group Expands

SAIGON, April 24 (UPI)—The four-government group in charge of searching for bodies of missing soldiers agreed today to allow each country 35 members.

When the team was first conceived, each party was allowed 14 members.

The group, composed of representatives of the United States, South Vietnam, North Vietnam and the Vietcong, also selected its official name: the Four-Party Joint Military Team on Dead and Missing Persons.

The group will have its headquarters in Saigon. Its next step is to set up procedures.

There are more than 1,300 Americans listed as missing in Vietnam.