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The Daily Summary

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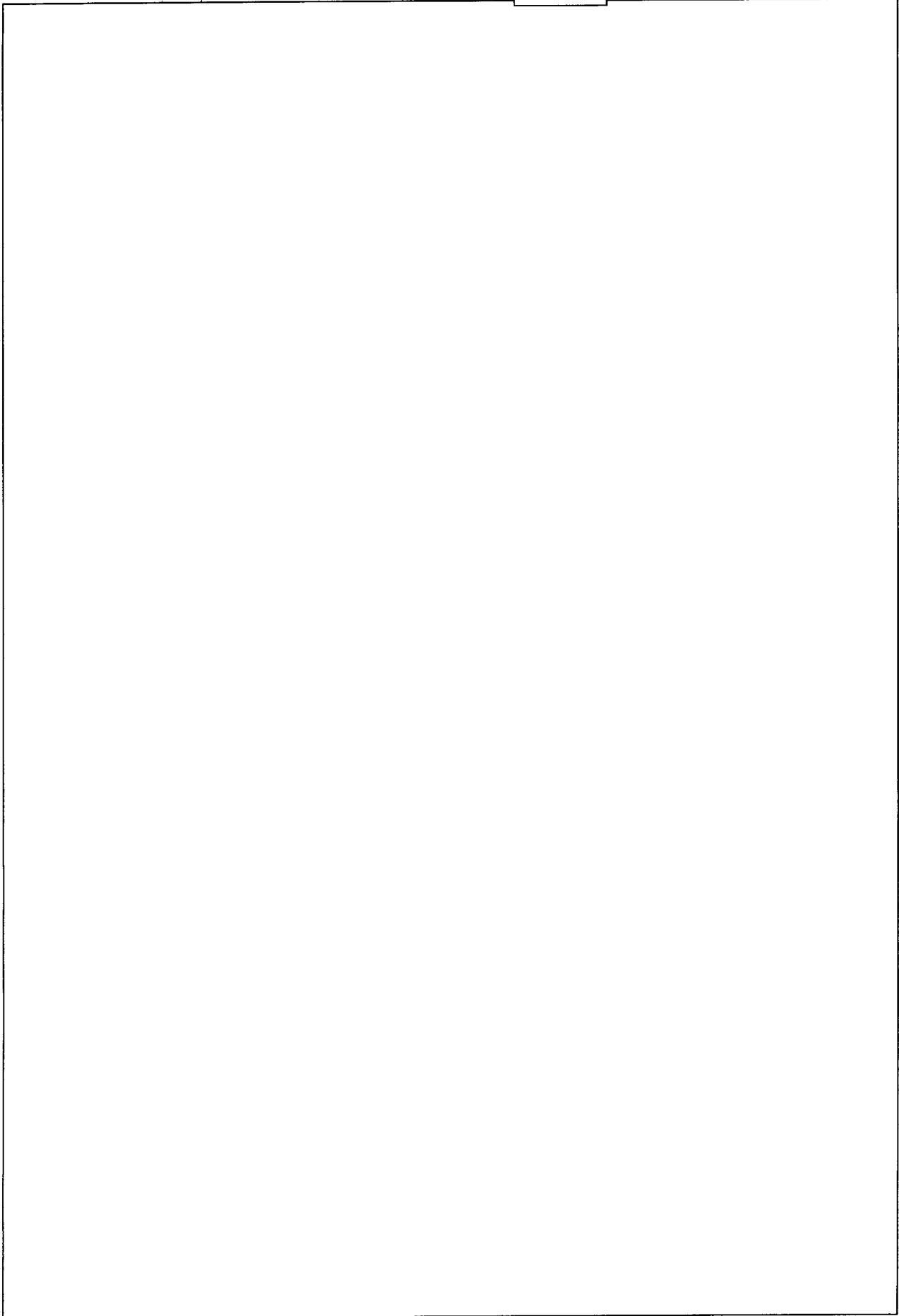
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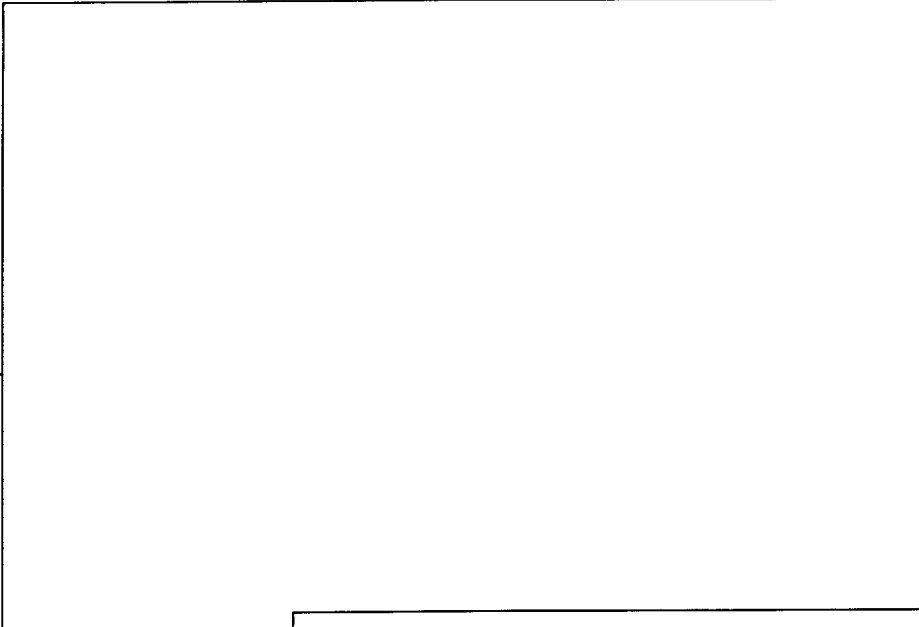
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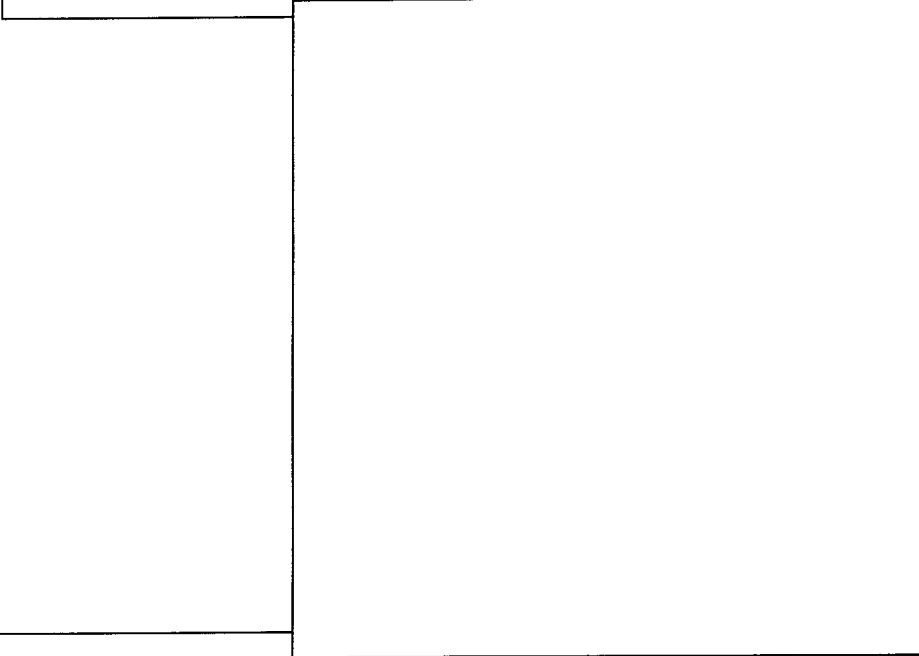


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September Prisoner Exchange Agreed by Two Sides in Laos

A Lao communist proposal that the long-delayed exchange of prisoners of war begin on September 12 has been accepted by the non-communist side.

The communists presented the proposal at the meeting earlier this week of the Joint Central Commission to Implement the Agreement, the coalition government group responsible for arranging prisoner repatriation. The proposal provides for repatriation at four general sites, but details of the exchanges must still be worked out.

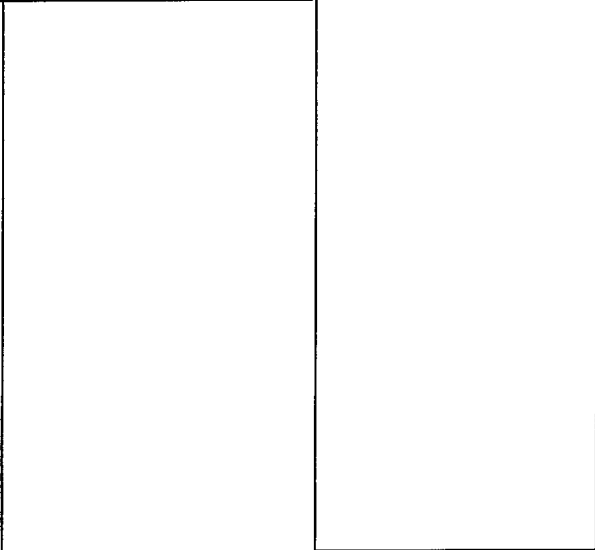
No mention has been made of the nationalities of the prisoners to be released, but Lao captives probably will be among the first groups set free. An estimated 170 North Vietnamese prisoners are believed to be held by the non-communist side. The Pathet Lao are believed to hold some 640 Thai prisoners and one American, civilian contract pilot Emmet Kay.

The chances for Kay's early release are slim. The Pathet Lao have maintained

that they do not consider Kay a prisoner of war since his capture on May 7, 1973, occurred after the cease-fire agreement was signed.

There have been indications that Kay's release may be linked by the Pathet Lao to political concessions by Washington. Heavy propaganda calling for a cessation of US aerial reconnaissance flights over Laos might point to the type of concession the communists are seeking.

The Pathet Lao proposal on prisoner exchanges comes as a surprise. The communists had insisted that other "higher priority" issues—such as the demarcation of boundary lines between the Pathet Lao and non-communist zones—be resolved before the prisoner problem could be addressed. The demarcation exercise is nowhere near completion. The protocol specified that 27 boundary markers were to be planted near "hotspots," points of potential conflict between the two zones, but to date only four stakes have been set.



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