

SAIGON AND THE VIETCONG CHARGE FIGHTING GOES ON; U.S. AIDES TERM IT 'LIGHT'

VIOLATIONS LISTED

JAN 30 1973

Combat Described as
on Downward Trend
and Indecisive

NYTimes

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Special to The New York Times

SAIGON, South Vietnam, Tuesday, Jan. 30—The South Vietnamese Government and the Communists accused each other of scores of additional cease-fire violations yesterday, but American analysts described the fighting that continued around the country as "scattered light activity" that was gradually diminishing in intensity.

South Vietnamese military spokesmen said that the Communists committed 54 additional cease-fire violations between 6 A.M. and noon yesterday, bringing the total since the cease-fire began to 480 alleged Communist violations.

The South Vietnamese did not report any cease-fire violations by their own troops although information from the field indicated that such violations were occurring.

Saigon Is Accused

The Vietcong command, in a North Vietnam press agency transmission monitored in Hong Kong, accused Saigon Government troops of violating the cease-fire repeatedly and said that Vietcong units were "scrupulously" adhering to the terms of the Paris accord.

"The fighting is definitely on a downward trend, more noticeably in some areas than in other," a high American official said. "There are no major units fighting. Nothing decisive is happening."

He said that despite high casualties, the fighting was "inconsequential" and that he expected it to subside substantially "in a day or two more."

No knowledgeable analysts had expected the fighting to end precisely at the moment when the cease-fire went into effect Sunday, the official said.

"I never thought this messy

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A South Vietnamese soldier wounded in fighting along Route 13 north of Saigon gets aid. Another, top, waits.



Associated Press

At another point near the same highway, South Vietnamese pass near the body of a Vietcong soldier.



United Press International

A North Vietnamese captain, center, posing with a South Vietnamese soldier, left, and a Vietcong soldier yesterday. The three met privately in a graveyard at Cai Lay.

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hing would somehow, with Germanic precision, stop with the clock," he said.

Other developments in the turbulent cease-fire situation included the following:

¶The International Commission of Control and Supervision of the cease-fire held its first meeting in Saigon yesterday. The commission, established by the Paris agreement, consists of representatives of Canada, Indonesia, Hungary and Poland. [Page 11.]

¶The four-party Joint Military Commission, also established by the Paris agreement to help oversee the cease-fire, met for the first time yesterday but immediately became ensnared in a procedural dispute. This body comprises military representatives of the United States, North Vietnam, South Vietnam and the Vietcong. [Page 11.]

¶The South Vietnamese reported what they said was the first political assassination since the cease-fire—the killing of a deputy hamlet chief in Dinh Tuong Province. They had predicted before the cease-fire that the Communists would engage in systematic political assassination once a peace settlement had been reached.

¶The withdrawal of American military personnel from South Vietnam accelerated, with 400 men departing Sunday, 300 to 400 more yesterday and about the same number scheduled to leave today.

Casualties Reported

In reporting yesterday on the fighting, a South Vietnamese military spokesman said that during the 24 hours that ended at 6 A.M. yesterday, a total of 1,095 Communist soldiers had been killed and 55 captured.

He said that 168 Government soldiers had been killed during the same period and 55 wounded.

By comparison, the South Vietnamese spokesman said, 1,076 Communist soldiers were killed during the 24 hours that ended two hours before the cease-fire went into effect, 533 during the previous 24-hour period and 376 during the 24 hours preceding that.

The South Vietnamese spokesman also provided a breakdown of alleged Communist cease-fire violations by time periods since the cease-fire began at 8 A.M. Sunday (7 P.M. Saturday, New York time).

He said that 53 had occurred in the first four hours after the cease-fire began, 138 during the next six hours, 235 in the next 10 hours and 54 during the next six hours, ended at noon yesterday.

Mostly Small Units

The South Vietnamese spokesman said that no Communist units larger than company size were engaged in fighting except in one instance—a battle involving a Communist battalion along Route 14 between Pleiku and Kontum. A Communist company comprises 100 men or fewer, and a battalion is roughly 300.

An American analyst said that almost all the fighting still going on involved "platoon-size units going into villages and hamlets and being thrown out. A Communist platoon normally consists of about 30 men.

In the engagement on the road between Pleiku and Kontum, the Government said that 18 Communist soldiers were killed yesterday morning when they attacked a South Vietnamese ranger unit. There were no Government casualties, the South Vietnamese spokesman said.

In a bloody six-hour battle in the same area Sunday afternoon and evening, the Government said some 200 North Vietnamese and Vietcong died, while reporting the loss of five of their own men killed and 14 wounded.

According to the South Vietnamese spokesman, three main highways have been cut by Communist forces since the cease-fire went into effect. Government troops were fighting

to reopen all of them, he said.

The spokesman said that Route 1 was cut at two points east of Saigon and in one place in Tay Ninh Province west of the capital. Route 14 was reported cut between Pleiku and Kontum, and Route 13 was said to be cut south of Chon Thanh.

In that area, the South Vietnamese spokesman said, 93 Communist soldiers were killed Sunday during a five-hour clash that began when Communist forces attacked a hamlet about four miles south of Chon Thanh. Three Government soldiers were reported killed and 11 wounded.

Because the road from South Vietnam's main vegetable-producing area around Da Lat is closed by fighting, a vegetable shortage has developed in Saigon. Restaurants and food shops had few if any locally grown fresh vegetables on hand and none were coming into the city.

Assassination List Reported

The political assassination reported by the South Vietnamese occurred late Sunday morning, they said, when the deputy chief was killed in a hamlet about four miles northwest of Sam Giang, a district capital in Dinh Tuong Province South of Saigon.

The South Vietnamese said that it was the first political assassination since the cease-fire started. South Vietnam has said that the Communists have compiled lists of political figures to be assassinated as part of a campaign against the Government of President Nguyen Van Thieu.

Meanwhile, American military personnel were flying out of South Vietnam at the rate of 300 or 400 a day. A United States military spokesman said that the men were leaving aboard commercial airliners under contract and were going directly to the United States. Two planeloads left Sunday, two yesterday and two are to leave today.

On the day before the cease-fire went into effect, there were 23,500 American military personnel in South Vietnam. Under the terms of the Paris peace agreement, all will be withdrawn within 60 days after the cease-fire.

Heavy Fighting Reported

Special to The New York Times

DA NANG, South Vietnam, Tuesday, Jan. 30—South Vietnamese and Communist troops continued to violate the cease-fire yesterday in heavy fighting in the Que Son Valley south of here.

The South Vietnamese Air Force, which under the cease-fire agreement is supposed to be flying only unarmed training missions, flew 26 bombing missions in the Que Son Valley Sunday and continued bombing yesterday, according to American military sources here.

The targets for the bombing and for artillery were described as North Vietnamese tanks moving east in the valley toward the populated coastal strip.

Six tanks were destroyed by air yesterday and three by artillery, the source said.

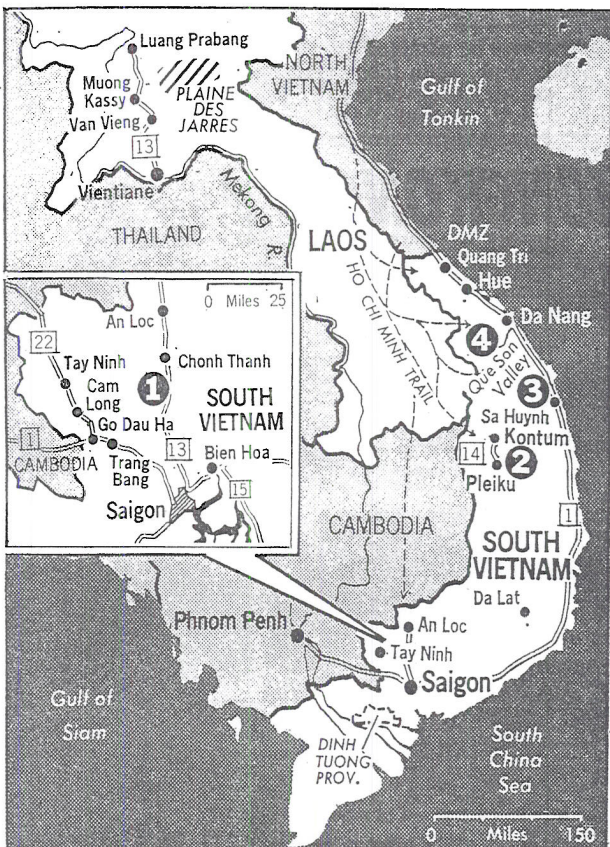
Coastal Battle Called Critical

Fighting was also reported to be continuing yesterday at Sa Huynh on the coast in Quang Ngai Province to the south, where Communist forces reportedly drove out Government troops Saturday.

Knowledgeable Americans here describe the situation at Sa Huynh as "critical" since Communist control there cuts South Vietnam in two and gives the Communists a port.

"We have been warning the Government about this for months, but they have lost it, and it gives the other side a place to land coastal supply vessels," one American said.

Representatives of neither the four-party Joint Military Commission nor the International Commission for Control and Supervision arrived in Da Nang or in other combat zones until late yesterday.



Highways were cut at Chon Thanh (1) and Kontum (2) as fighting went on near Sa Huynh (3) and Que Son (4).

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