

# Saigon Eases Up On Red Delegates

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SAIGON—The first week of the cease-fire has gone off more smoothly than many observers here expected.

The incidence of truce violations has diminished to a point that won't upset the diplomatic applecart. And the applecart is moving.

Considering how frozen the situation looked just a few days ago, the progress is remarkable.

Today the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese delegates will be allowed out of their barbed wire enclosed compound for the first time since they arrived here. And tomorrow the truce-watch teams of the International Commission of Control and Supervision are supposed to begin moving into the field.

The truce-watch teams, composed of Canadians, Indonesians, Hungarians and Poles, will set up shop first in major cities, such as Hue and Da Nang, with smaller teams later fanning out to lesser towns, if all goes well.

The decision of the ICCs to send out its truce-watch teams apparently was tied to a South Vietnamese agreement to relax the security measures which had kept the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese envoys virtual prisoners since they arrived here in the wake of the cease-fire.

They came to serve on the Joint Military Commission along with representatives of the other two belligerents, the U.S. and South Vietnam.

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## Truce Progress

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The Saigon government billeted them in a compound called Camp Davis at sprawling Tan Son Nhut Airbase.

While newly refurbished and comfortable enough, the compound was fenced and guarded by South Vietnamese sentries. The Communist delegates couldn't leave and no one was allowed in to see them except a handful of officials directly connected with the negotiations.

At this point in the complicated truce arrangements, the International Commission is supposed to report to the Joint Military Commission composed of the four belligerents.

### Chief Delegates

The Polish and Hungarian members of the ICCS took the stand that the Joint Military Commission was not a valid agency as long as two of its members were kept behind barbed wire.

The meeting today, at a suburban villa, is apparently a sufficient start toward

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breaking that impasse to win agreement from the two Soviet-block members of the ICCS to start sending out the truce teams.

All the chief delegates on both commissions, the ICCS and the JMC, are expected to be present, meeting for the first time.

Simply letting the meeting take place represents a significant relaxation of the Trojan horse attitude which the Saigon government has displayed toward the enemy envoys.

But the edginess is far from dissolved. Yesterday morning, the Viet Cong delegation raised a VC flag inside the heavily guarded compound, causing consternation among the guards.

As an academic exercise in international law, the Viet Cong delegates might claim

the right to show their colors, since they are granted diplomatic status under the Paris protocols.

### Minor Clashes

But there is still too much gunfire in Vietnam for the South Vietnamese to listen to such niceties. "We made them take it down," a spokesman said. He professed not to know just how.

The international truce-watch teams were supposed to take to field within 48 hours of the cease-fire, but that was an unreasonable proviso.

As it turns out, the delay is of no great consequence. The truce violations, while numerous and widespread, were minor engagements that did not change either the military or political balance in the country.

The danger was that a small skirmish might explode into a large battle. That could still happen. But the incidence of clashes is definitely down.

And for the short term at least the prospects for maintaining the truce are looking up.